HANDBOOKS OF
CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

THE LETTERS OF ST. AUGUSTINE

W. J. SPARROW-SIMPSON, D. D.

CANCELLED

W. E. Gladstone

St Deiniol's Library
Hawarden Clwyd

CANCELLED

Founded by
The Rt Hon W E Gladstone

C
62 Au
20

CANCELLED

n° sulf.

THE LETTERS OF ST. AUGUSTINE

HAWARDEN.

HANDBOOKS OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

THE LETTERS OF ST. AUGUSTINE

BY

W. J. SPARROW-SIMPSON, D.D.

LONDON:
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1919

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	7
I.	LETTERS PRIOR TO HIS CONSECRATION	24
II.	LETTERS ON PAGANISM	45
III.	LETTERS ON THE DOCTRINE OF GOD	63
IV.	LETTERS ON AFRICAN CHURCH DIVISIONS	77
V.	LETTERS ON THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE	126
VI.	LETTERS ON BIBLICAL EXPOSITION	185
VII.	LETTERS TO S. JEROME	216
VIII.	LETTERS TO WOMEN	255
IX.	LETTERS ON THE EUCHARIST	276
X.	LETTERS ON DIOCESAN AFFAIRS	301
XI.	LETTERS OF THE CLOSING YEARS	319
	INDEX	333

THE LETTERS OF ST. AUGUSTINE

INTRODUCTION

AUGUSTINE'S letters have never been translated into English as a whole. Large selections have been translated containing what appeared to the translators the most important. But all such selections are liable to omit passages of very great importance. And this is certainly what has happened in the present case. Cunningham's version in the Edinburgh translation of Augustine's writings is an admirable rendering of the letters which it gives. But the omissions are many and serious.

The purpose of the present work is not to translate but to give such an account of Augustine's life and thought as may be derived from his letters. A lengthy correspondence in any controversy is sure to contain a great deal of repetition. The same illustrations, the same expositions, the same ideas are certain to be included over and over again. Such repetitions are for the most part avoided in the present work, which condenses the contents of the letters and presents their principal features.

But since Augustine often refers his correspondents for further information to what he has written on a particular subject in one of his larger treatises, it seemed necessary for completeness' sake to reproduce in such cases the main ideas of the teaching to which the Bishop refers. On no single subject is the whole of Augustine's teaching necessarily to be found in his letters. But if

the letters are thus supplemented by what he has taught elsewhere a fairly full presentation of the great writer's mind may be obtained.

The letters range over a period of forty-three years. The earliest was written in A.D. 386, the year before his conversion; the latest in A.D. 429, the year before his death. There are 270 letters in the Benedictine edition. But of these, fifty are addressed to Augustine; so that we have only 220 from the Bishop's own pen. And these 220 include one or two official letters of Councils whose authorship is undoubted.

After all, 220 letters in forty-three years does not seem an unwieldy correspondence. If we omit the letters written before his consecration this leaves 213 during his episcopate.

But then in Augustine's case a letter was often an elaborate treatise. So great was his wealth of thought that frequently his spring became a river and his river became a sea. These letters occupy a folio volume consisting, in Gaume's edition, of 1370 columns.

Moreover, Augustine informs us that he estimated his writings to extend to 232 treatises, not including letters or sermons (Letter 224, § 2).

Augustine's letters were arranged by the Benedictine editors as far as possible in the order in which they were written. But there is a large section of which the dates are unknown. It has been thought best in the present summary of the contents to arrange the letters in groups according to subjects, preserving the chronological order, as far as possible, within each group. This arrangement has the advantage that Augustine's teaching and development of mind on various doctrines can be easily followed. It also enables the reader to see the proportion of his correspondence on the principal subjects which absorbed his attention.

At the same time, it is difficult to carry out rigorously this method of grouping according to subjects. For Augustine's correspondents had a way of launching on

the Bishop a host of miscellaneous inquiries. This prevents anything approaching to systematic arrangement, if the contents of each letter are to be given, as they must be, in one place. Biblical expositions again form a convenient group by themselves; while of course many an exposition will be found in other divisions. It has further seemed best to group together by itself Augustine's correspondence with S. Jerome, although the letters contained in it belong in part to the section on the doctrine of grace and in part to Biblical exposition.

It is certainly important to retain the chronological order of Augustine's letters within each group, as far as this might be; because this arrangement enables us to see the development of his mind and his changes of opinion. For this great writer changed his opinion on more subjects than one, and on matters of very great importance.

Three instances of this change have been noted.[1]

He changed his opinion about coercion in religion. In a letter written during his priesthood making overtures to the Donatists (Letter 23, § 7, A.D. 392) he distinctly says that on the Catholic side there shall be no appeal to men's fear of the civil power. There is to be nothing but dispassionate appeal to reason and Scripture authority. But sixteen years later (Letter 93, § 17, A.D. 408) he owns that his original opinion is now abandoned. The expediency of coercion has been proved by its results.

He changed his opinion also about predestination. In his earlier period he understood the text, "Who will have all men to be saved," as meaning a universal offer of salvation. But in his later period, that is, from A.D. 417, he was led, by inferences on the doctrine of grace and Divine Will, to reject what is the obvious and natural meaning of the passage quoted, and to deny, in the interests of a theory of predestination, the existence

[1] See Rottmanner in *Revue Bénédictine*, pp. 257–261. 1901.

of any sincere will on the part of God that all men shall be saved.

He changed his opinion also on the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Whereas in the early part of his career he always ascribes it to S. Paul (cf. *De Div. Q.* lxxxiii., lxxv. 1; written in A.D. 389), after the year 409 he ceases to make that ascription. Thus he says in one place simply "scriptum est ad Hebræos." (Letter 187, § 34, A.D. 417.)

The letters fall quite easily into certain main divisions:

1. It is natural to group together the letters of the early period written while he was a layman, and as a priest: all in fact written before the date of his consecration to the episcopate.

2. Next to this may be placed the letters on Paganism. These form a suitable introduction to his great reply to Paganism, *The City of God.*

It would be very natural to suggest that the next group should be those concerned with Manichæism; that form of Oriental Dualism to which Augustine was an adherent for some nine years, and from which he escaped with so much difficulty. But it is a singular fact that nothing survives of Augustine's correspondence with Manichæans. There are of course allusions to the controversy, and cases noted of its intrusion into the Church, even among the Church's teachers (cf. Letter 236 and Letter 64, § 3). But there is no direct correspondence with the sect or with its leaders. This is all the more remarkable because controversy with the Manichæans occupied a very important place in Augustine's early literary labours. There are his five works against them which a correspondent called the Pentateuch against the Manichæans. There is, above all, the great treatise in reply to Faustus. But there is no separate letter to Faustus, nor indeed to any Manichæan leader. It may be that in the later period of Augustine's episcopate Manichæism had lost its

strength, or that more urgent controversies absorbed his attention.

3. Accordingly, passing over the Manichæan discussions, the next group of Augustine's letters is that which is connected with the Christian doctrine of God. These are his replies to Arianism and his exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity.

4. Next to these may be grouped the very important series of letters dealing with African Church divisions: the Donatist controversy with all its discussions on validity of Sacraments, on schism, and on the conditions of ministry. Much in these letters will be found to be of living interest, involving principles of ecclesiastical unity important for all time.

5. Following on these are grouped the letters on the doctrine of grace: that subject with which, more than all others, Augustine was identified.

6. Then there are a number of letters which may fairly be grouped together as Biblical expositions. It is admitted, of course, that this arrangement is not strictly systematic. Letters on interpretation of Scripture will be found in most other groups. Nevertheless, it is suitable that examples of Augustine's letters as a Biblical student should be given by themselves.

7. To this is naturally appended the celebrated correspondence between Augustine and Jerome. It is, of course, very largely concerned with Biblical interpretation and study. But it forms also a group by itself, very characteristic of both these great writers. Also it gains a great deal by being allowed to tell consecutively its own story.

8. Another series of Augustine's letters which deserve to be grouped together, especially in view of modern discussions, is his letters to Women. They will help to illustrate the position then occupied by educated women in the Church.

9. Much of Augustine's Sacramental teaching is scattered over his letters on Donatism. But they are

chiefly concerned with Baptism and Ordination. It seems well to gather in a special group Augustine's letters on the Eucharist.

10. From the central act of Christian worship we turn to the field of administration. We come to get an idea of a bishop's occupations, his activities, his practical duties in the fifth century. An attempt is, therefore, made to collect the letters on Diocesan affairs.

11. Lastly comes the natural and inevitable section, letters concerned with Augustine's closing years.

Instruction on almost all the theological problems then agitating the human mind may be found in the pages of these letters: Paganism, Arianism, Sabellianism, Novatianism, are all represented, as well as Donatism and Pelagianism. It is impossible not to be filled with profound admiration for the wonderful intellectual activity and comprehensiveness of this great genius. Never was there a mind more alert, more sensitive to contemporary movements, more implicated in the life and thought of his own time.

Most instructive it is to note the variety of persons who corresponded with him. Large numbers of questions and difficulties were sent him by all sorts of people. They certainly never spared him. They pelted him with whole strings of inquiries. And the patient Bishop seldom spared himself in answering them. Sometimes he took the initiative and wrote to separatists asking what their objections were against unity with the Church; or he propounded some dilemmas which he requested them to decide; or he invited them to conference and discussion. He always seemed alert in cases of conversion to the Church, strengthening the newcomer by some exposition of Catholic principles.

Quite a number of his letters are directed to high officials of the State. This department of his correspondence naturally belongs to the last twenty-five years of his episcopate. There is Donatus, Proconsul

of Africa (Letter 100); Generosus occupying a consular rank in Numidia (Letter 116); Marcellinus the Tribune (Letters 128, 133, 138, 139, 141), whose tragic fate was one of Augustine's greatest sorrows; Apringius the Proconsul (Letter 134); Macedonius—Africæ Vicarius (Letter 154, cf. Life by Possidius, § 20); Cæcilian, suspected of being implicated in the judicial murder of Marcellinus the Tribune (Letter 151); Boniface, Count of Africa, whom Augustine instructed in African Church troubles, and who admitted the Vandals into that unhappy country, and afterwards vainly tried to drive them out (Letters 185 and 220); Count Valerius, to whom Augustine sends a copy of one of his writings (Letters 200 and 206); the Tribune Dulcitius (Letter 204); Count Darius (Letter 229), who was sent to Africa to secure peace, and who asks for a copy of Augustine's *Confessions* (Letter 230), which was sent to him (Letter 231); and Count Pascentius, an Arian, with whom Augustine conferred at Carthage, and who went about boasting that he had refuted the Bishop, and to whom the Bishop wrote a long and important exposition of the Catholic Faith (Letter 238).

Readers of the letters cannot fail to be impressed with Augustine's ascendancy among the bishops of his time. He was the moving spirit in Councils, whether concerning the Donatists or the Pelagians. Official documents issued by African Councils were composed by him. Even when (as several times occurs) his name is not mentioned, the Augustinian authorship is obvious both in the arguments and in the style. His familiar antithesis, his plays on words, his dogmatic outlook, all are there. Very significantly we find at the end of one such document the endorsement of the Primate: "I, Aurelius, Bishop of the Catholic Church of Carthage, have signed this letter" (Letter 128).

It was the Pelagian controversy which drew Augustine into most intimate relations with Rome and its Bishops. We find him giving expositions of the doctrine of grace,

in deferential terms indeed, to Pope Innocent. We find him delivering Pope Zosimus from a total misapprehension of the real opinions of Pelagius. We find him instructing and, after some misgivings, congratulating the future Pope Sixtus on his energetic defence of the traditional faith.

Particularly informing is the recognition at Rome of Augustine's pre-eminence as a theologian. He receives Innocent's letters as a member of the Councils of Carthage and of Milevis. He receives another letter from Innocent as one of the five chief African defenders of the doctrine of Grace. But Innocent went further still. When he wrote to the Primate of Carthage there was only one other person to whom a letter was directed, and that other person was the Bishop of Hippo.

So far as ecclesiastical status is concerned Augustine was only Bishop of a very third-rate seaport in an inferior province. He was not the Primate of one of the African provinces, still less did he occupy the chief place in the African hierarchy. Nevertheless it is he who is the mind of the African clergy. He is in correspondence with all parts of the Church: with John, Bishop of Jerusalem, with Simplician of Milan, with Paulinus in Spain, with Jerome at Bethlehem, with Gaul and Marseilles, and with Rome.

The literature mentioned or quoted in Augustine's letters is considerable.

Among Pagan writers the favourites are Cicero, Virgil and Terence. Like many another reader since his time, Augustine was deeply impressed by the famous line:

"Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto."[1]

(Letter 155.)

Horace is also quoted (Letter 143).

Reference is made to letters written by Seneca to the Apostle S. Paul (Letter 153, § 14). Among philosophers Democritus, Plato and Plotinus are mentioned: the last

[1] Terence Heaut, 77.

repeatedly (Letter 118, § 33), as was to be expected, seeing that Augustine's obligations to the Neoplatonists are obvious everywhere. Porphyry and his impressions on Christianity (Letter 102, § 8); Apollonius of Tyana, and Apuleius of Madaura are often named (Letter 102, § 8), the two latter frequently together. Apuleius being an African would be familiar to the Pagans with whom Augustine corresponded (Letter 102, § 32; Letter 138, § 18).

In Christian literature frequent reference is made naturally to S. Cyprian. Tertullian is also mentioned.

Seven Scripture expositors are enumerated by Jerome in a letter to Augustine. They are Origen, Didymus, Apollinaris of Laodicea, Alexander, Eusebius of Emesa, Theodore of Heraclium, and John Chrysostom (Letter 75). Augustine makes remarks on these, but without showing any particular knowledge of them (Letter 82). We know from other parts of his writings that he was acquainted with works of S. John Chrysostom. Elsewhere four authors are quoted: Ambrose, Jerome, Athanasius and Gregory. It appears, however, that the last is not, as Augustine supposed, Gregory Nazianzen, nor indeed a Greek writer at all, but a Latin: perhaps, as the Benedictines suggest, Gregory of Elvira in Spain.[1] There is also a reference to Philastrius (Letter 222).

But Augustine's favourite author is certainly S. Ambrose. To appreciate the deep veneration for the Bishop of Milan which appears repeatedly in Augustine's letters we must bear in mind the pages of the *Confessions*. Ambrose was the living embodiment of priestly ideals; at once attracting and repelling by his entire unworldliness and self-denying life. It was Ambrose's character even more than his exposition of the Faith which contributed so largely to Augustine's conversion. No

[1] See note by Benedictines to Letter 148, § 10. Gaume's edit. II. 746. A treatise, possibly by Gregory of Elvira, on the Orthodox Faith against the Divine is printed in Appendix to S. Ambrose, ed. Migne, ii. 549–568.

wonder we find eager inquiries after some of Ambrose's writings which Augustine does not yet possess (Letter 31). No wonder he is quoted as a guide and appealed to as an example in matters of practical religion. "Ambrosius noster" is one whose insight is decisive (Letter 82, § 21). Beatus Ambrosius, expounding the Gospel of S. Luke, lives in Augustine's glowing memories (Letter 147, § 17). "Ambrose that saintly man" is quoted again, half apologetically, with an assurance that his opinion is not valued only because through his ministrations the saving Baptism was bestowed upon Augustine, but for the intrinsic excellence of his expositions (*ib.* § 52). Again "the aforesaid Bishop of Milan" is quoted (Letter 148, § 12); and the practical question how to conduct oneself with regard to unfamiliar practices when worshipping in a church away from home, is settled at once by appeal to Ambrose's example.

A quantity of religious literature of an unorthodox and debased description found its way to the Bishop's house at Hippo. Many a copy of heretical writings was sent for Augustine's opinion, or to induce him to make reply. Many of the documents of the Donatist controversy were in his possession; so were the writings of the Pelagians. Reference to these and many a quotation are to be found in the course of the letters. Augustine has immortalised them by his quotations. There are also references, although not very numerous, to Apocryphal writings. One of the strangest of these is a hymn which was being circulated by a Spanish sect, the Priscillianists, who asserted that it had been composed by the Lord Jesus Christ and given to His Apostles on the night of the Betrayal; being in fact the hymn referred to in the Gospel as sung before they went out to the Mount of Olives. A copy of this document was sent by a Spanish Bishop to Augustine for his criticism. The hymn is as follows:

"I desire to set free and I desire to be set free.
I desire to save and I desire to be saved.

I desire to be born. Dance all of you.
I desire to lament. Mourn ye all of you.
I desire to adorn and I desire to be adorned.
I am the lamp to thee who seest me.
I am the door to thee whosoever knocks at me;
Thou who seest what I do, be silent concerning my works."
(Letter 237.)

Augustine was familiar with these words and says that they were common among apocryphal writings. They were accepted by certain sects which accepted the canonical writings also. The Priscillianists who accepted them accounted for their omission from the Canon on the ground that they were kept secret from the natural man and reserved for the spiritually minded. They justified this exclusion by an appeal to the Book of Tobit, where it is written (xii. 7): "It is good to keep close the secret of a king; but it is honourable to reveal the works of God." Accordingly this secret of the king, this "sacramentum regis," was concealed from those who walked after the flesh, and not after the Spirit.

Augustine points out that this statement implies that the canonical scriptures are not according to the Spirit. Further he calls attention to the inextricable confusion in which this theory involved the Priscillianists. For when they proceeded to explain what these mystic sentences mean they quoted texts from the New Testament to throw light upon them. For example the line:

"I desire to set free and I desire to be set free"

was explained by a reference to Galatians v. 1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." If thus the obscurities of this hymn are to be explained by the clearer utterances of the New Testament, what becomes of the Priscillianist theory that the hymn was excluded from the Canon in order that spiritual truths should be concealed from the carnally minded? (Letter 237).

Many details concerning the Councils of the Church are given in Augustine's letters. The famous African Code of Canons is in process of formation. Councils held in the time of Cyprian are appealed to as precedents, and evaded. Much stress is laid on "instituta majorum" (Letter 36, § 2). The different kinds of Councils are carefully discriminated, and the authority of each is discussed. An accusation against a presbyter must be finally settled by a Council of six Bishops. This was a Canon of the Council of Carthage in 348 (Letter 65). There were in Africa Provincial Councils. For instance the Council of Milevis, which was the Council of the Province of Numidia (Letter 176). There were Councils of the entire "Africana Ecclesia" (Letter 22, § 2). These were held under the presidency of the Bishop of Carthage as Primate. The Councils of Carthage were very independent and influential in their dealings with the Popes, especially with Pope Zosimus. The right of appeals to Rome was a burning question in the fifth century, a subject of expostulation, and of careful restriction. Cæcilian Archbishop of Carthage possessed the right of appeal from the African Council to the Bishops beyond the seas; because the Church is not confined to Africa (Letter 43, § 11). The ultimate decision belonged, in the Donatist case, after it had been tried before the Pope and his assessors, to a plenary Council of the Universal Church (Letter 43, § 19); that is to say, to the collective episcopate.

The African Church divisions and the action of the imperial authorities naturally compelled discussion on the relations between Church and State. We find the maxim formulated that a Bishop ought not to be tried before a proconsular tribunal (Letter 43, § 13). Augustine reminds the Donatists that by this maxim they are self-condemned; for it was they who made the appeal to the authority of the State (Letter 43, § 13). Doubtless the distinction between the secular and the spiritual powers was clear enough to a disciple of

S. Ambrose. Augustine could certainly never forget the principle formulated by the Bishop of Milan that the Emperor is within the Church but not above it. Certainly also the author of the treatise on *The City of God* was not likely to confuse the State with the Church. But yet it must be acknowledged that the appeals of the African Church to the State in the matter of the Church divisions, and the fact of a conference of bishops, over which an imperial lay official presided as Moderator, must have done much to confuse the distinction in the popular mind.

Moreover we find Augustine asking for copies of imperial decisions against the Donatists in order to have them read in all the churches of his diocese (Letter 139).

The rights of a bishop within his diocese were sometimes ill-defined and constantly subject to irregularities. The right of a bishop to choose his own successor was prohibited and exercised. Augustine was actually consecrated to a see not vacant, in ignorance of Canons forbidding this. Augustine complains that a man has been ordained sub-deacon in the diocese of Hippo without the Bishop's consent (Letter 63). On the other hand there was no difficulty in sub-dividing a diocese. Augustine decreed the consecration of a Bishop to a portion of the diocese of Hippo. The consecration was the Primate's act. The new bishop's misconduct made his deprivation necessary, and that part of the diocese apparently reverted to Augustine's control.

Augustine's way of addressing his ecclesiastical inferiors is to identify himself with their level. Thus a deacon is the bishop's fellow-deacon (Letter 149, § 1), and a presbyter is his fellow-presbyter (*ib.* § 34: condiaconus, conpresbyter).

Much is incidentally revealed concerning African Church life and its customs. The Church had developed a considerable amount of external dignity since the days of Constantine. We read of the episcopal thrones ascended by flights of steps, the canopied seats,

the pulpits (Letter 23, "absidæ gradatæ . . . Cathedræ velatæ"; Letter 29, "exhedram ascenderemus").[1] We read of several churches in the town of Hippo belonging to the Catholics; also of ecclesiastical houses and buildings. There was also a church of the Donatists to which, at the beginning of Augustine's ministry, the majority of the population belonged. Evening service was daily said in the church of Hippo (Letter 29). But the moral level was deplorably low. Augustine's energies as preacher were first directed against the drunkenness which prevailed in his own congregation at the festival of the Martyrs (Letter 22). We find that it had not been usual before Augustine's time for a priest to preach when the Bishop was present. This innovation was introduced by Bishop Valerius at Hippo, who was thankful to avail himself of Augustine's ability. And the example was followed by the Primate Aurelius at Carthage (Letter 41). Extraordinary local incidents of church life are found in these letters. There is a weird account of the outrageous attempt of the congregation at Hippo to compel a wealthy laymen who was there on a visit to take an oath that he would be ordained among them. It has been cynically observed that when the layman had impoverished himself by his charity the people's interest in him ceased. The congregation at Hippo do not shine in this incident. With this should be compared the curious scene in church at the selection of a coadjutor to Augustine with the right of succession (Letter 213).

North Africa in Augustine's time was a strange mixture of languages and nationalities, as appears in the proper names. Valerius, Bishop of Hippo before Augustine, was a Greek who preached with difficulty in Latin. Whether a priest was able to preach in Latin or in Punic was of great importance. The question is several times mentioned in the Letters. It has been

[1] Letter 29.

thought that the difficulties between Catholic and Donatist were partly created by racial differences, the Latin colonists on the one side, the early inhabitants on the other. We find uncouth Punic names among the Church's martyrs, provoking the ridicule of the cultivated Roman Pagan, who could not stand such proper names as Mygdon, Sanais, and, worst of all, Namphanio (Letter 16). Then again we find apparently a Jewish element among the Clergy. Lazarus is a Bishop of the African Church (Letter 175).

Among the Bishops a different origin is suggested by the names Chrisimus (Letter 244), Pancarius (Letter 251), Eufrates (Letter 142), Gignantius (Letter 176).

Then again there is Bishop Pontican (Letter 247) and Classician (Letter 250).

What strikes all students of the Letters is the curious anticipation in North Africa of the Puritan form of Christian names. Thus we find Bishop Benenatus (Letter 253), and Bishop Adeodatus. Three Bishops in one Council share the name of Quodvultdeus. Among Augustine's correspondents is a priest named Deogratias (Letter 102). Bishop Habetdeus figures in the Conference of 410.

The work of the Church in North Africa was hindered by lack of clergy acquainted with the language of the people. Augustine's predecessor in the Bishopric of Hippo was imperfectly acquainted with the Latin language. Hippo was a Roman colony, but contained also a Punic population. Augustine's sermons give at times Punic words. In a letter still extant (Letter 84) Augustine refuses to give up his deacon, Lucillus, for work in another diocese on the ground that the deacon was able to talk Latin. This is the reading in the text of the letter. But it has been thought much more probable that the deacon's usefulness consisted in his ability to talk Punic.

Another feature of Church life which Augustine's letters display is the constant intercommunication

between different portions of the Church. Correspondence is, indeed, often difficult. One letter-carrier is delayed, consecrated to the episcopate, and dies without delivering his letters. Letters sometimes miscarried (Letter 149), and were circulated among people for whom they were not meant, while failing to reach the persons for whom they were intended. This happened with letters sent by Augustine to Jerome. Correspondence was also at times fearfully belated. Augustine complains that he wrote a letter while still *juvenis*, and has not yet received an answer though he has become *senex*. But if years at times elapsed between a letter and its reply the fault was not always with the bearer of the letter. By way of precaution Augustine mentions that he has sealed his letter with a seal representing the profile of a man's face (Letter 59).

In spite of all these drawbacks and difficulties the reader of Augustine's letters is constantly reminded how closely the various portions of Christendom are linked together. Travellers are continually moving from one country to another. A Spanish priest, Orosius, visits Augustine at Hippo and is sent on to Bethlehem, almost certainly commissioned to find out what the Pelagians are about, and to neutralise the leader's influence with such bishops as John of Jerusalem, who may not be equal to his subtlety. No part of Christendom seems isolated from the rest. Pope Zosimus sends the Bishop of Hippo on a mission to another part of Africa, on some business connected with the Holy See. Bishop Augustine informs and instructs the successive occupants of the Roman See on the nature of the Pelagian disputes. The Roman bishop misunderstands, through inadequate knowledge, an appeal made to him by an African priest, and requires to be better informed. But there is no isolation; no mere insularity. The Church is one vast organism.

A study of Augustine's letters is also a study in character. His extraordinary ascendancy over his

contemporaries; the uniqueness of his genius; his intellectual power, of which he could not possibly be unconscious; the deference with which the leaders of the Church regarded his utterances might easily have had disastrous effect upon the individual himself. What strikes the student of these letters is the writer's profound consciousness of the limitations of human knowledge; his readiness to confess his ignorance; his emphatic refusal to be regarded as an oracle; his insistence that all theologians are liable to error and require correction; his willingness to be instructed; his submission to the authority of the world-wide Church.

From the use sometimes made of Augustine's theological opinions it seems necessary to make what is nevertheless an exceedingly obvious remark that the opinions of a theologian are by no means necessarily accepted by the Church. Augustine's predestination theories, which are in these letters carried to rigorous extremes, have never been endorsed by the Catholic Church.

No introduction to Augustine's correspondence would be complete without drawing attention to his constant references to the Scriptures. Considerable portions of the Bible could be reproduced from his letters. His teaching is continually founded upon prophetic and apostolic utterances. The quotations are profuse. The use made of them is most penetrating; so obviously the result of deep and continued study.[1] This appears chiefly in the teaching on Sacrament and Schism. But above all is the wonderful exposition of the Christian doctrine of Grace.

[1] Cf. Bossuet, *Défense de la Tradition*, Pt. I. iv. cap. xvi.

[The Letters have been studied in the Benedictine text, and in Gaume's edition, Paris 1836. But reference has been made to the Vienna edition by Goldbacher, 4 vols., 1895–1911. The references to S. Jerome are to Vallarsi's edition, Verona 1735.]

CHAPTER I

LETTERS PRIOR TO HIS CONSECRATION

THE first series of letters belong to the period before Augustine's consecration. They are dated between the years 386 and 395. They include the letters to his friend Nebridius; to Valerius, Bishop of Hippo; to Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage, and to Paulinus of Nola. They were all written after the return to Africa. No letters of the earlier period in Italy exist. Information about that time is obtained from the *Confessions*, from the discussions embodied in the early treatises, and from scattered allusions in the later letters.

Among the early letters of Augustine there is a series of twelve,[1] written before his ordination, that is before the year 391, to his friend Nebridius. Nebridius owned an estate near Carthage. His acute criticism caused much perplexity to Augustine during his Manichæan phase.[2] Nebridius followed Augustine to Milan expressly in order to pursue together the search for truth. He was one of the circle of Augustine's most intimate associates—sharing his retreat in the Villa at Cassiacum not far from Milan during the months which followed immediately after the great writer's conversion. Nebridius himself was still outside the Christian Faith. He was unable to believe in the Incarnation. He held the theory that the Body of Christ was not constituted of flesh and bones, but was only an appearance and a phantasm. But he was an eager inquirer after truth. Augustine's conversation led the way which his friend

[1] Letters 3–14.

[2] *Confessions*, vi. 17; vii. 3.

was to follow.[1] They earnestly discussed together in Italy the problem of immortality and the nature of evil and good. When Augustine returned to Africa, Nebridius settled in his country house near Carthage, where he lived with his mother. Meantime Augustine founded his community at Thagaste. And Nebridius's heart was there. Weak health, however, prevented his joining it. Letters were frequent between them.

Augustine had sent Nebridius some copies of his writings, no doubt the Dialogues composed in the country house near Milan, and had received a grateful reply congratulating him as happy. Augustine's answer breathes the calm reflective spirit of the period of retreat in which, without knowing it, he was preparing for his priestly labours.

"I read your letter beside the lamp after supper. The time of rest was near but not of sleep. On my bed I fell into a long meditation, and talked to myself, Augustine conversing with Augustine: Is it not true, as Nebridius says, that I am happy? Not altogether; for that I am still far from wise he himself would not venture to deny. May not, however, a happy life be the portion of those who are not wise? That is not probable. For were it so, lack of wisdom would be but a small defect, whereas it is the source of all unhappiness. How then did Nebridius come to such a view? Was it because he had read my tracts and ventured to think me wise? Surely his pleasure could not make the man so rash: more especially since he is a person whose judgment, as I well know, is of weight. Here is the explanation: he wrote what he thought would please me, because he was pleased with my writings; and he wrote in a joyful mood, careless what he entrusted to his joyous pen. What would he have written if he had read my *Soliloquies?* He would have rejoiced still more. But he would not have found a

[1] *Confessions*, vi. 26.

higher term to call me than happy. So then he has ascribed to me the highest of all names, and has kept nothing in reserve whereof to call me if he became more joyous over me than he is at present. See what joy can do!"

This interesting passage shows already the writer's accurate and reasoned use of words, and also that he judged his *Soliloquies* to be a more important work than his other early writings. There is no question that in this his insight was true, and that his opinion has been endorsed in the judgment of posterity.

Augustine throws this letter into the form of a Catechism.[1]

Of what parts do we consist?—Of soul and body.

Which of these is the nobler?—Doubtless the soul.

What do men praise in the body?—Nothing that I see but comeliness.

And what is comeliness of body?—Harmony of parts in the form, together with a certain agreeableness of colour.

Is this comeliness better when it is true, or when it is illusive?—Unquestionably it is better when it is true.

And when is it found true?—In the soul. The soul, therefore, is to be loved more than the body.

But in what part of the soul does this truth reside?—In the mind and understanding.

With what has the understanding to contend?—With the senses.

Must we then resist the senses with all our might?—Certainly.

What then if the things with which the senses acquaint us gives us pleasure?—We must prevent them from doing so.

How?—By acquiring the habit of doing without them, and desiring better things.

But if the soul die, what then?—Why then truth

[1] Letter 3.

dies, or intelligence is not truth, or intelligence is not a part of the soul, or that which has some part immortal is liable to die; conclusions all of which I demonstrated long ago in my *Soliloquies* to be absurd because impossible; and I am firmly persuaded that this is the case, but somehow through the influence of custom in the experience of evils we are terrified and hesitate. But even granting, finally, that the soul dies, which I do not see to be in any way possible, it remains nevertheless true that a happy life does not consist in the evanescent joy which sensible objects can yield; this I have pondered deliberately and proved.[1]

Nebridius desired to be more fully acquainted with his friend's religious development.[2] Augustine replies that he has not yet arrived at the beginning of the soul's manhood. His soul is in its boyhood still. He hopes it may be called a promising boyhood rather than a a good for nothing. He is, at any rate, well assured that the intellect is superior to the senses; which implies the superiority of things perceived by the intellect over those perceived by the material organs of sensation. If Nebridius can discover any flaw in this argument let him say so.

But, after all, these activities of the intellect, although valuable in their place and degree, are completely subordinated to the religious experiences of the spirit: "and when after calling upon you for help I begin to rise to Him and to those things which are in the highest sense real, I am at times satisfied with such a grasp and enjoyment of the things which eternally abide that I sometimes wonder at my requiring any such reasoning as I have given above to persuade me of the reality of those things which in my soul are as truly present to me as I am to myself."[3]

It seems that Augustine's fellow-citizens at Thagaste

[1] Letter 3. [2] Letter 4. [3] Letter 4, § 2.

invaded his hours of study, and made serious inroads on his time and thought. Nebridius was highly indignant with this frustration[1] of the very purpose of Augustine's retirement from the world. "Is it true, my beloved Augustine," he wrote, "that you are spending your strength and patience on the affairs of your fellow-citizens, and that the leisure from distractions so earnestly desired is still withheld? Who, I would like to know, are the men who thus take advantage of your good nature, and trespass on your time? . . . Have you no friend at hand to tell them what your heart is set upon? Will neither Romanian nor Lucinian do this? Let them hear me at all events." Nebridius proposes that Augustine should remove to the writer's home.

In a remarkable passage in answer to Nebridius's inquiry by what means certain thoughts and dreams are put into our minds by higher powers or by superhuman agents, Augustine says,[2] "It is my opinion that every movement of the mind affects in some degree the body." Although no physical effect of mental activity be discernible to other human beings, yet it may be discerned by beings of acuter faculties than those of men. "It is by no means unreasonable to suppose that beings which act with the powers of an aerial or ethereal body upon our bodies, and are by the constitution of their natures able to pass unhindered through these bodies, should be capable of much greater quickness in moving whatever they wish, while we, though not perceiving what they do, are nevertheless affected by the results of their activity." This is certainly a remarkable essay in fourth-century psychology.

Nebridius greatly valued Augustine's letters. They "bring to his ear the voice of Christ and the teaching of Plato and of Plotinus."[3] But, greatly as he valued the written message, he longed far more with the irritability of weak health for actual conversation. He grew

[1] Letter 5. [2] Letter 9. [3] Letter 6.

importunate in proposals that they should live together. He even reproached Augustine with indifference to his plans for common life.[1] Augustine was much distressed at his friend's reproach, but explained that he cannot transfer the Community to Carthage or the neighbourhood. Their mutual friend Lucinian suggested that Nebridius could bear the journey in a litter; but his mother would never consent to his removal in his invalidish state. Augustine cannot leave the Community and come to Nebridius. For Nebridius has mental resources when left to himself, but in the Community are some who require constant attention. Neither can Augustine divide his time between the Community and Nebridius. Constantly journeying to and fro would be beyond his strength.

"I cannot accomplish what I wish unless I cease wholly to wish what is beyond my strength." Moreover continual travelling would be destructive to tranquillity and collectedness. Doubtless incessant movement is, in certain rulers of the Churches, blended with the grace of recollection; but it is neither Augustine's mission, nor within reach of his capabilities; still less is it congenial to his tastes. There is much need for withdrawal from the tumult of things transitory, in order to acquire the calmness of spirit which can say I have no fear.

Nebridius's desire was not to be achieved. During the brief remainder of his days he was the favoured recipient of Augustine's letters. But apparently they never met again on earth. He became "a faithful member of the Catholic Church."[2] And when "his whole household were brought to Christianity through him," he was "released from the flesh." Augustine afterwards dedicated to his memory a touching page of his *Confessions*.

No sooner was Augustine ordained to the priesthood than he wrote to his bishop, Valerius, the well-known

[1] Letter 10.

[2] *Confessions*, ix. 6.

letter[1] asking for some months quiet before his priestly labours should begin. When the circumstances of his ordination are remembered this request was only right and natural. Augustine's ordination was no calm, deliberate reception of the ministerial commission after a lengthy period of conscious preparation. He not only did not seek the priesthood, he had deliberately avoided it. His ideal, as his letters have already shown, was a life of study and devotion; not at all a life of active ministry and administration. He was living in Community as a recluse. He avoided cities where ordination might be imposed upon him by the congregation or by the clergy in spite of his reluctance. When he visited Hippo he thought himself safe because there was no vacancy in the See. Nevertheless, ordained he was, in spite of his reluctance and in spite of his tears.

His letter to Bishop Valerius still remains to testify to his feelings on being suddenly set in the responsibilities of the Apostolic ministry. His words are memorable.[2] "If," he wrote, "the duties of the office of a bishop or presbyter or deacon be discharged in a perfunctory and time-serving manner, no work can be in this life more easy, agreeable, and likely to secure the favour of men, especially in our day; but none at the same time more miserable, deplorable, and worthy of condemnation in the sight of God"; and on the other hand, "if in the office of bishop or presbyter or deacon the orders of the Captain of our Salvation be observed, there is no work in this life more difficult, toilsome, and hazardous, especially in our day, but none at the same time more blessed in the sight of God."

Augustine complains that he has never been taught, either in youth or in early manhood, what the method of that ministry is. He thought that his ordination in such a state of ignorance must have been a punishment for his sins. He tells the old Bishop with delightful

[1] Letter 21. [2] *Ibid.*

frankness that he was accustomed formerly, with an air of superiority, to criticise the defects of the clergy. He has now begun to realise the rashness of his judgment. It was this which caused his tears when he was being ordained: tears which were completely misunderstood by some who wished him well.

He was ordained just at the very time when he was beginning to devote himself to the study of the Scriptures. He was just advanced far enough to realise his deficiencies. What can be more essential for a man who undertakes the ministry of the Sacrament and of the Word of God? Note this familiar twofold division of ministerial functions already in use. He appeals to Father Valerius to give him time to study the Scriptures before he begins to teach. At least let him have till Easter. He asks Valerius to aid him with prayers that his absence from the people may not prove fruitless to the Church of Christ and the benefit of his brethren.

Augustine's peculiar power was recognised by his ecclesiastical superiors very soon after his ordination. Already he is in correspondence with the Primate,[1] Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage, on the defects of African Church life ("Ecclesia Africana"). It appears that the festival commemorations of the Martyrs at Hippo were scandalous scenes of drunkenness. Quoting S. Paul's exhortation to the Romans, "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying," Augustine says that while the second of these three classes of sin is punished severely by the Church, by exclusion from the Sacraments, neither the first nor the third were treated as seriously. Unless the laws of the Church are as strict in these cases as in the other, these sins will be less seriously regarded in popular esteem. S. Paul forbade participation in a common meal with Christians who were drunkards. If we are to receive the Body of Christ together with

[1] Letter 22.

persons with whom S. Paul prohibits the sharing of a common meal, at least, says Augustine, let us keep these scandals away from the graves of the saintly dead. He feels that the moral level of the African Church in these matters is inferior to that of many other places. The evil is long-standing and deeply rooted. Augustine thinks that the authority of a Council of the Church will be necessary if this evil is to be removed. At the same time tact and sympathetic treatment will be essential ("Magis docendo quam jubendo, magis monendo quam minando").

"Thus, at least, we must deal with the multitude; severity is to be employed toward the sins of the few. And if we threaten, let it be done with sorrow, threatening from Scripture a judgment to come, so that deference be not paid to our authority but to God Himself in our words. In this way an impression will be made first upon the spiritually minded or upon those who are inclined that way; and then by their influence and through the gentlest but most urgent exhortations the rest of the multitude will be overcome."[1]

A later letter will show how admirably Augustine practised his own precepts when he came to deal with difficulties and disorders of this kind in the Church at Hippo.

Augustine observes further that festival commemorations in the cemeteries were regarded by popular opinion not only as honouring the Martyrs but as some advantage to the dead ("solatia mortuorum"). Consequently it is necessary to disentangle the true element in these observances from the false. Sanction should be given to the belief that offerings for the spirits of those who are asleep do really confer some benefit on the dead.[2] But the practice must be regulated; and extravagance forbidden. No offerings are to be put up for sale, and

[1] Letter 22, p. 41, § 5.

[2] Oblationes pro spiritibus dormientium, quas vere aliquid adjuvare credendum est. *Ibid.* § 6.

offerings of money must be given immediately to the poor. Regulations of this kind will justify no complaint on the ground that the dead are neglected or the bereaved ill-considered.

As for strife and deception, the third class of the list of defects, Augustine fears that these exist more seriously among[1] the clergy than among the people. He speaks of the subtle dangers of human praise, and the temptations to self-esteem whose force no man realises until he has made war against it. On this subject he speaks feelingly, for he has felt its danger.

He closes by asking the Bishop to pray for him, adding: "There are many things concerning my life and conversation of which I will not write, which I would confess with weeping if between my heart and your heart there were no other medium than my mouth and your ears."[2]

Another of Augustine's correspondents was Paulinus of Nola.

Augustine kept up his correspondence with Paulinus of Nola throughout his life. He wrote to Paulinus at a later date (417) instructing him in the Pelagian disputes (Letter 186); and yet later still (about 421) he composed, in reply to Paulinus's inquiries, the treatise on care for the dead.

Paulinus had formerly held the office of Consul, and had travelled much about the world. He knew Ambrose at Milan, and looked on him as his spiritual father. He had retired from secular functions and was now residing in Spain, and had married a lady named Therasia. He records in a letter to Augustine's friend Alypius that he had been baptised by Delphinus, Bishop of Bordeaux,[3] and consecrated Bishop by Lampius of Barcelona. He knew a number of clergy in high places, including Bishop Aurelius of Carthage. His veneration for Augustine was unbounded. Five of

[1] Letter 21, § 7. [2] Letter 21, § 9. [3] Letter 24, § 2.

Augustine's writings are known to him;[1] and he does not hesitate to consider them divinely inspired, and to call them the Pentateuch against the Manichæans. He writes as one familiar with the Churches and the Monasteries of Africa, whether at Carthage, Thagaste, or Hippo Regius. He sends Alypius a copy of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius; asks to know which of his own hymns Alypius is acquainted with; and sends him, in the usual way of salutation, a loaf which he calls *eulogia*.[2]

It is noteworthy that both this letter and another[3] to Augustine are sent not only by Paulinus but also by Therasia his wife. In this letter Augustine is addressed in glowing language as a light worthy of its place on the candlestick of the Church, diffusing widely in the Catholic towns the brightness of a flame fed by the oil of the seven-branched lamp of the Upper Sanctuary.

With characteristic humility he says that if the office which they hold is considered, Augustine is his brother; if maturity of intelligence, Augustine, although his junior in years, is his father. And he asks to be instructed in the Sacred Scriptures and in spiritual studies.

A letter to Licentius, son of Romanian, recalls an earlier chapter of Augustine's career.[4] Readers of the *Confessions* will remember that far back in the critical period of Augustine's youth, when the slender resources of his family were exhausted and he was withdrawn from higher education, Romanian, a wealthy African citizen, came to his support and generously provided the necessary funds (*Confessions*, II. 5). From that time Romanian followed with interest Augustine's progress. They were together at Milan in that discussion, over which many a reader must have smiled, when oblivious to the fact that some of the party had wives, the little group of Augustine's friends debated on

[1] Letter 24, § 2.
[2] Letter 24.
[3] Letter 25.
[4] Letter 26, A.D. 395.

possibility of leading a Community life (*Confessions*, VI. 24). Augustine's earnestness was sometimes a little lacking in a sense of the ludicrous.

In the little party of friends in retreat at the country house of Verecundus, outside Milan, Licentius was included. At that time he was Augustine's pupil, and, as the records of their conversations show, was in his master's opinion deficient in moral calmness and sincerity of purpose. Licentius was gifted with ability and was an educated person, but his interests were classical and pagan, literary and worldly, not by any means spiritual or Christian. He is frequently mentioned in the *Dialogues* and early writings of his great teacher.[1]

Now that Augustine was a priest, Licentius sent a lengthy piece of Latin hexameters to his former teacher.

Augustine was not at all disposed to criticise his verses, but rather if possible to deepen his character. He was very anxious about the young man's morals. In affectionate terms Augustine told him that while dreading the restraints of wisdom the young man was becoming enslaved to mortal affairs. He tells Licentius that the restraint of discipline, while admittedly hard to bear at first, results in freedom and in joy: whereas the fetters of the world have a delusive charm and an experience full of misery.

Augustine tells him that if his verses were not according to rule of rhythm he would be ashamed of them, and would never rest until they had been carefully corrected: but if his conduct is not in accordance with the laws of God, how can he be content to let it remain uncorrected? Is an error in literary composition more serious to him than moral disorder must be in the ears of God?

Licentius had put into verse the wish that the days spent with Augustine in the hills of Italy might be

[1] See *De beata Vita*, 6, *Works*, I. p. 501.

recalled. If Augustine will but express the wish nothing would prevent Licentius from following him.

Augustine quotes this sentiment and applies it to morals. He calls on Licentius to follow him not to the hills of Italy but into a better life. "Give heed to your own poem," he exclaims, "listen to yourself, my most unreasonable, most unheeding friend." He calls upon the young man to attend to the words: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

To this he adds a constraining and affectionate appeal. "Why do you turn away from me? Why yield your ears to the imaginations of deadly pleasures? They are false. They will perish. They lead to destruction. They are false, Licentius." He tells him that if he were to find a golden crown in the earth he would present it to the Church. Licentius has received from God a mind which is spiritually golden, and he makes it an instrument of his passions, and a means of approach to Satan.

The bearer of Augustine's reply to Paulinus was Romanian.[1] Augustine reminds Paulinus that the bearer's name will be found in the treatise on True Religion:[2] a treatise which was evidently one of the five which Augustine sent to Paulinus. This treatise was written for Romanian's instruction and in reply to his inquiries. Augustine informs Paulinus that Romanian possesses copies of all his writings, and will submit them to Paulinus's consideration. But Augustine asks Paulinus to remember that what he has written erroneously is his own, whereas what he has written correctly is due to Him in Whose light we shall see light. "For," says Augustine characteristically, "what have we that we have not received?" It is important to note this ascription of insight to the grace of God in this early period of Augustine's development, and long before the Pelagian troubles had become conspicuous.

[1] Letter 27, p. 62.

[2] *De Vera Religione*, 12.

Paulinus had written to Bishop Alypius asking for an account of his religious experiences.[1] Alypius, whose spiritual life had been bound up with that of Augustine, and who had been the solitary witness of Augustine's conversion (*Confessions*, VIII. 30), could undoubtedly have written a religious autobiography of exceptional interest. But he appears in this letter of Augustine as a man of profound humility and reserve, whose sensitiveness of nature did not allow him to record his innermost experiences even for the edification of others. He therefore asked Augustine to reply instead of him. Augustine accordingly answered Paulinus's request by dwelling on the exceptional character of his intimate friend, and by informing Paulinus that Alypius was a relative of Romanian, the bearer of this letter.

It further appears that Romanian was travelling to Italy with his son Licentius, the young man who was the subject of Augustine's affectionate anxiety. He commends Licentius to Bishop Paulinus in the earnest hope that the young man will be influenced by him. "I desire earnestly," wrote Augustine, "that while his life is yet in the green blade, the tares may be turned into wheat, and he may believe those who know by experience the dangers to which he is eager to expose himself." Augustine sends Paulinus a copy of the young man's poetry and of his own letter in reply.

An exceedingly graphic letter,[2] written by Augustine soon after he became a priest to his friend Alypius, Bishop of Thagaste, shows the tenacity of pagan customs over Christian converts, and the difficulty experienced by the Church in overcoming them.

The ordinary Christian of Hippo was strongly disposed to convert the festivals of the Church into occasions for drunkenness. This scandal appears to have reached its worst on the Festival of S. Leontius, a former Bishop of Hippo, and in the Church which he had erected and

[1] Letter 27, § 5, p. 65.

[2] Letter 29.

which was dedicated in his memory. Bishop Valerius imposed on his priest Augustine the task of preaching against this popular vice.

Just before the festival the passage read in the Gospel was on casting pearls before swine, and Augustine availed himself of the lesson to make some emphatic statements against sensual self-indulgence. He told the congregation that people who did that sort of thing in their own houses ought to be driven away from the pearls which were in the Church's possession.

This discourse on pearls and swine was made to a somewhat scanty congregation. But the hearers reported the substance of it in Hippo, where it roused considerable opposition.

On a later occasion the people assembled in much larger numbers. The Gospel account of Christ cleansing the Temple was the singularly appropriate lesson for the day. Augustine drew the moral that if Christ could not tolerate the intrusion of worldliness in the Sanctuary even in the form of commercial transactions, the congregation might infer for themselves what our Lord's attitude would be towards vices which are nowhere permissible. Drunkenness at a religious festival would have been an intolerable scandal among the Jews. What was it among Christians? Augustine read to them from Exodus how the great Legislator threw down the Tables of the Law in despair at the conduct of his people. What distinguished the Christian from the Jew was the writing of the Law upon his heart. What degraded the Christian beneath the Jew was the introduction into Christian worship of a scandal which never once occurred among the Jews except when that people fell away into pagan idolatry.

Accordingly Augustine laid Exodus aside and turned to the Pauline Epistles. He reminded his hearers how S. Paul required the faithful to separate themselves from the drunken; how he warned that they who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God; how

he corrected the Eucharistic scandals at Corinth ; how he characterised the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit.

Then Augustine pleaded with the people with all the earnestness that he could command, by the Passion of Christ, by their regard for the venerable Bishop Valerius, by the trust imposed on the preacher, by solemn warnings from the Psalms ;

"If his children forsake my law I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges."

Being deeply moved he spoke so effectually that they were also moved and softened, and priest and people wept together over the sins of the congregation.

But there was yet the outer circle to be convinced and won. Adverse criticism upon the preacher still continued. The time-honoured argument against reforms was made as usual. There had been clergy in Hippo before Augustine came. They permitted these customs to continue. They were just as true Christians as Augustine was.

Rumours of these criticisms were brought to the preacher. He prepared himself to answer them by appeal to the assurance given to Ezekiel (xxxiii. 9), that the prophet who warns the evil even if his warning is unsuccessful at least delivers his soul. He would shake his robe and depart.

That sermon however was not delivered. For the critics themselves came and interviewed Augustine before the time of service, and he was enabled to win them over to his course. Setting aside therefore the sermon which he had prepared, he contented himself with explaining how it was that the clergy of a previous generation had not insisted on suppressing these festivities. It was due to the fact that the Church was in the period of persecutions. The leaders of the Church made concessions to the pagan ways. It was an indulgence to human infirmities : an encouragement

to the pagan to become converted, if too austere a demand were not made upon him at the beginning. They were permitted to honour the Martyrs by social festivities. These reasons were now matters of the past. Now that men were converted the Christian standard must prevail.

It appears that the supporters of pagan custom had been able to appeal to similar festivities held in Rome in the Basilica of the Blessed Apostle Peter.

Augustine's reply to this is characteristic. He admitted the fact but urged that it had been often forbidden; that the place where it happened was a long way off the Bishop's dwelling; that in so large a city the population was very mixed; and that in any case those who desire to honour S. Peter should obey his precepts, and pay attention to his ideal plainly given in his letters, rather than to the practice which went on in his Church in contradiction to his ideal. Thereupon Augustine quoted 1 Pet. iv. 1–3, where S. Peter says that the time of our past life should suffice us to have walked in drunkenness.

The effect of this explanation was excellent. Augustine directed that the time should be spent in Scripture readings and in the Psalms. And the day passed in a very edifying manner.

One further day completed the good work. The congregation assembled in larger numbers than ever. Scripture was read and Psalms were sung. So the evening came on. The Bishop ordered Augustine, much against his will, to address the people again. Accordingly he gave a short thanksgiving for the blessings of the day. So the daily evensong was reached, and evening closed in upon the singing of a hymn.

Meanwhile, he hears that there has been trouble at another Church in the diocese. The Circumcellions broke into the Basilica and destroyed the Altar. The place was called Hasna, where Brother Argentius is presbyter.

From a letter to Paulinus of Nola[1] comes the announcement that Augustine has been consecrated in 395 coadjutor bishop at Hippo by Bishop Valerius, who was not satisfied with continuing him in the rank of presbyter. This was done relying on certain precedents. In Augustine's Life by Possidius we are informed that Augustine had misgivings whether the consecration of a successor during a Bishop's lifetime was not against the custom of the Church. But he was led at the time to believe that the procedure was correct. Precedents both in the African Church and in other Churches across the seas were produced for it. Augustine did not know at the time that this was forbidden by the Council of Nicæa.

The eighth Canon of Nicæa regulates in such a way as to maintain the principle "that there may not be two bishops in the city." Hammond says that "the rule of one bishop only in a city was of universal observance in the Church from the very beginning . . . All attempts to ordain a second were condemned and resisted . . . This rule however did not apply to the case of coadjutors, where the bishop, from old age or infirmity, was unable to perform the duties of his office."[2]

Towards the close of his life, some four years before his death, Augustine held a meeting of his people, and with their approval took the step of nominating his own successor. But he declined to have his successor consecrated while he lived. He informed his people that such consecration was forbidden by the Council of Nicæa, and that the irregularity incurred in his own consecration had been done in ignorance, since neither he nor Bishop Valerius were aware of the Nicene Decree at the time.[3] It might be thought a singular thing that African Bishops should be ignorant

[1] Letter 31, § 4.
[2] Hammond, *The Definitions of Faith*, 1843, p. 28.
[3] See Letter 213, § 4.

of the Decrees of Nicæa seventy years after they had been passed. But when we find even a Pope (Zosimus) confusing the Decrees of Nicæa with those of another council we shall be less surprised at the ignorance of a local bishop.

Augustine begs Paulinus to pay a visit to Africa,[1] sends him his three books on Free Will, and refers to some writings of S. Ambrose which are no longer extant. One of Augustine's Community, Brother Severus, has been made Bishop (Antistes) of the Church of Milan. Augustine sends Paulinus bread, after the manner of eastern salutation.

Paulinus did not visit Africa in person, but some of the Spanish clergy did. They brought back to Paulinus in Spain, letters from Aurelius of Carthage, Alypius of Thagaste, Severus of Milevis, and Augustine. After receiving these, Paulinus, acting on Augustine's request about Licentius, wrote a letter to Romanian, the young man's father. He congratulates the African Churches on possessing Augustine among their Bishops, and speaks in high praise of the aged Bishop Valerius's freedom from all jealousy of Augustine's great abilities. Paulinus expresses the hope, nay the assurance, that Romanian's son will listen to this "summus Christi pontifex."[2] Augustine's pleadings will prevail over the young man's earthly desires.

The writer directs the remainder of his letters to Licentius. Remembering the young man's love of verse, Paulinus sends him a poem in which he sings Augustine's praises. What the young man thought of the poem history does not record. But Paulinus did not hesitate twice over in some eighty-six lines to end an hexameter with the word Augustinus. Licentius was very fastidious of his literary productions. The young man did nothing of this kind in the Carmen which he sent to Augustine, his father's teacher

[1] Letter 31, § 4. [2] Letter 32, § 3.

(cf. Letter 26). Paulinus's verses are full of admirable advice and spiritual principles.

At the date of Augustine's priesthood (391–395) it was not the custom in the African Church that a priest should preach when his bishop was present. It appears to have been Bishop Valerius of Hippo who introduced this innovation. Other bishops soon began to follow his example. There is a letter written by Augustine together with his friend Alypius, soon after the former became a bishop, to Bishop Aurelius of Carthage[1] congratulating him on authorising priests to preach at Carthage when the Bishop was present.

References to Augustine's delicate health appear from time to time in the letters, as they do in the sermons and in the treatises. Weakness of constitution is frequently mentioned in the *Confessions*. Illness hindered him during the period of retreat in the villa outside Milan before his baptism. Before he had been Bishop two years he speaks of himself as well in spirit, but unable to walk or stand.[2] He writes to his friend Profuturus from a bed of sickness.

It was the time when Megalius, Primate of Numidia, had just died. The Primate's relations with Augustine had been unfortunate. Megalius, for some reason not distinctly ascertainable, wrote an angry letter against Augustine while the latter was only a priest. But Megalius afterwards apologised for this letter before an African council. He also became Augustine's consecrator. The letter was remembered, and the apology forgotten, by Augustine's Donatist opponents. This unfortunate letter and its misuse is expressly mentioned by Augustine in his reply to the Donatist Petilian,[3] which was written shortly after the letter to Profuturus. And the same calumny, in spite of Augustine's refutation, was repeated yet again on the Donatist side. It

[1] Letter 41.
[2] Letter 38, A.D. 397.
[3] *Contra litt. Petit.* iii. 19.

has been thought probable that the Primate's unjust and angry letter was in Augustine's mind when he mentioned the death of Megalius, and was the reason why he added: "We are not free from troubles neither are we deprived of protection. If there are grounds for grief so also there are for consolation."

This reference to Megalius leads Augustine to warn himself against the dangers of anger, and its tendency to become habitual. Prolonged anger is hatred.[1]

[1] Inveterascens ira fit odium. Letter 38, cf. Letter 9, § 4. Ira est autem, quantum mea fert opinio, turbulentus appetitus auferendi ea quæ facilitatem actionis impediunt. On this distinction between ira and odium see Trench's *Synonyms*.

CHAPTER II

LETTERS ON PAGANISM[1]

In Augustine's correspondence with Pagans we have the advantage of possessing letters addressed to him as well as his replies. Of several of these letters the date cannot now be ascertained. Those whose dates we know range between 390 and 412. We are here enabled to see how Christianity appeared in the beginning of the fifth century to Pagans of culture and position; what were the lines of attack as well as what were the lines of apologetic defence. Augustine's earliest controversial reply to a Pagan writer dates in 390, that is just six years after the famous controversy in Milan between S. Ambrose and the Prefect Symmachus.[2] The atmosphere is much the same in Africa as it was at Milan; only on the Catholic side there is a yet more serene assurance of victory. The Pagan consciously represents a religion no longer supported by the State. The Christian consciously possesses political influence as well as spiritual. The Pagan is sarcastic or deferential, mingling respect for the Church official with contempt for his principles, but always curbed by consciousness of dealing with a person in power. The Pagan's ideas of Christianity are often quite inadequate, and sometimes mere misrepresentation. But he has a high conception

[1] Much help will be found on this subject in Gaston Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme*. Two vols. 1891. See also Leclercq, *L'Afrique Chrétienne*. Two vols. 1904.

[2] Ambrose, *Works*. Migne, ii. 971; Augustine's Letter 18.

of a bishop's function; and while he does not hesitate to use Christian terms in non-Christian senses, he can appeal to a bishop on the basis of episcopal ideals.

Just a year before Augustine became a priest he received a letter[1] from a Pagan grammarian of Madaura; a scornful and contemptuous letter of criticism on Christian religious practices. Maximus, the writer of this letter, admitted that the multitude of divinities was a fiction invented by the Greeks. In his opinion the existence of one Supreme Deity was a fact which no one could be so mad as to deny. God is a name common to all religions.[2]

But what arouses his contempt is the host of dead men whom Christians are elevating to the position of minor divinities. These heroes are quite impossible persons with appalling names. Maximus pours ridicule on such names as Mygdon, Sanais, Namphanio:[3] names detestable alike to gods and men; martyrs who in his opinion ended a scandalous career in a well-merited execution. It reminded him of Egyptian monsters finding their way among the gods of Rome.

The writer calls on Augustine to set aside his usual weapons of logic which aim at the demolition of all certainty, and to inform him who that God is whom Christians claim as their peculiar possession and declare to be present in hidden places.

The writer says he has no doubt that this letter will be thrown on the fire. But if so it will only involve the destruction of a document, not of its contents, for he has other copies which he intends to circulate freely. Wherewith he takes farewell of the distinguished recipient, whom he regards as an apostate from his own religion; ending with a hope that the gods may preserve Augustine; those gods through whom all mortals on the

[1] Letter 16. (?) A.D. 390.

[2] Maximus might have learnt his opinions from Cicero.

[3] This is the Benedictine text. The Vienna Edition reads: "Migginem, Sanamem, Namphamonem."

earth, in a thousand ways, and with discordant harmony, worship the one Common Father of gods and men.

When Maximus alludes to the Christian Deity as one Whom His adherents assert to be present in hidden places, we may wonder whether he had heard of the Presence in the Eucharist.

Such a letter laid itself open to the reply that it was difficult to know whether the writer was in earnest or in jest.[1] Augustine explains that the uncouth, outlandish names of martyrs which offended so greatly the grammarian's literary taste were after all only Punic appellations. Maximus as an African writing to Africans, since both he and Augustine were living in Africa, ought not to be startled by the use of Punic names.

If the grammarian is disposed to be scandalised by names, there were many among the Pagan divinities who ought to offend him. Augustine gives him examples.

Augustine assures him that the private worship in Christian places will bear favourable comparison with what transpires in certain Pagan temples. He appeals to Maximus to find some question worthy of discussion and he will meet him. Meanwhile let him rest assured that Christian Catholics (there is a Church of them in the grammarian's own city) do not worship the dead, and that no creature is adored as divine, but only the one true God.

In the year 408 the Pagan population at Calama, a town where Possidius was Bishop, broke out into a furious attack on their Christian fellow-citizens.[2] Nectarius, a leading Pagan, alarmed at the legal consequences for his town, implored Augustine to intercede for them. The letter is interesting because it gives a contemporary pagan idea of a bishop. Nectarius recognises that the offence will be punished very severely if dealt with according to the laws of the State. "But a bishop is guided by another law. His duty is to promote the welfare of

[1] Letter 17, A.D. 390. [2] Letter 90.

men, to interest himself in any case only for the benefit of the parties, and to obtain for other men the pardon of their sins at the hand of Almighty God." Nectarius acknowledges that compensation must be made. He deprecates retaliation. He is moved by a deeply patriotic spirit and loves his country.

To this appeal Augustine replied commending the writer's[1] patriotic zeal; but insisting that the highest form of patriotism is that which is concerned for a nation's eternal destinies. He criticises the contrast between the Pagan moralists and the morals of the pagan religion; points out, as he does in the work on *The City of God*, the effect of the Pagan legends on the morals of young men; quotes to this effect from the plays of Terence; urges the inconsistency of imitating Cato rather than Jupiter in the daily conduct while worshipping Jupiter rather than Cato in the temples; and insists on the blindness of worshipping in the temples what is ridiculed in the theatres.

If Nectarius is increasingly anxious the older he becomes to leave his country in prosperity, let the people be converted to the true worship of God.

Augustine quotes Nectarius's ideal of the conduct appropriate for a bishop, and proceeds to give his version of the facts during the recent riot. It was on the 1st of June, a Pagan festival, when a Pagan mob attacked the church at Calama with stones, attempted to set it on fire, killed one of the Christians, while the Bishop only escaped by concealment in some hole where the invaders failed to find him, although he could hear their expressions of disappointed rage. Meanwhile the secular authorities of the town did nothing to keep the peace.

Augustine had himself visited the town since the outrage and addressed the Pagans. He assures Nectarius that the concern of the Church is for the souls of the

[1] Letter 91.

Pagans. As for the loss Christians will seek no compensation.

If justice is to be done to these outbursts of Pagan violence it must be remembered that they were suffering from the suppressive enactments of the State, and the aggressive movement of the Church. In the year 400 the great Pagan Temple at Carthage was closed by imperial authority. Augustine himself in a letter (Letter 232, § 3) speaks of the Pagan Temples in Africa being closed, or ruinous, or destroyed, or converted to other uses; their statues of the deities being broken or burnt or destroyed. It was this destructive policy which provoked retaliation. In the colony of Suffectana in Augustine's diocese Christians destroyed the statue of Hercules. As a consequence sixty members of the Church were massacred by the infuriated Pagan populace. Augustine wrote promising to restore this emblem of Pagan religion. "Gold, metals, and marble, shall all be supplied them. Will they please restore to the Church the sixty souls who have been massacred." (Letter 50.)

Sometimes a Pagan Temple was converted to Christian purposes, sometimes a portion was incorporated in the Church, or a church was built upon the foundation of the older building.[1]

The Pagan had powerful incentives before his eyes for exasperation as he passed along the familiar places of his town, and saw the ancient religious landmarks completely revolutionised while he remained unconverted. Augustine was conscious enough, and told the Pagans so in a letter, that it was one thing to remove the statues from the temples, another thing to remove them from their hearts.

Sometimes Augustine deals with difficulties which Christianity presented to the Pagan mind.

There is a letter[2] dealing with six questions raised by

[1] Cf. Leclercq, *L'Afrique Chrétienne*, II. 87-88.

[2] Letter 102, A.D. 408.

Pagans, which illustrates the sort of criticism then made on Christianity. The letter came from Carthage. The subjects are, the Resurrection of Christ; the late period at which the Christian religion arose; the objection raised by Christians to Pagan sacrifice while Christians practise rites which are essentially similar; misconceptions of Christ's teaching on retribution; difficulty in believing the doctrine that God has a Son; exposition of the Book of Jonah.

The subjects are as miscellaneous and ill-assorted as in a modern popular gathering of the sceptically disposed. Augustine sent his reply in the form of a letter to the priest Deogratias.[1]

Much confusion existed in the minds of inquirers between the raising of Lazarus and the Resurrection of Christ. They were not clear which of these two represented the Christian doctrine of the future resurrection. Augustine had no difficulty in explaining the distinction.

The Pagan criticism [2] on the late arrival of Christianity among religions was ably put by Porphyry. If Christ is the Way and the Truth and the Life, what of the men who lived in the centuries before Christ came? It is no answer to say that they possessed the religion of the Jews: for that religion was of late beginning, and when it came was long confined to a narrow corner of Syria.

To these criticisms on the newness of Christianity, Augustine replied [3] that from the very beginning of the human race men believed in the Word of God by anticipating His coming; and were undoubtedly saved through Him. The pre-Christian ages looked forward to His appearing; the Christian ages look back to it. Thus religion adopted one sacrificial form corresponding to the period of anticipation and another for the period of retrospect. But the principle of faith in the Word of God was the same, and the Salvation was the same.

[1] Letter 102. [2] Letter 102, § 8. [3] Letter 102, § 11.

Moreover there is such a thing as Providential control of human history,[1] by which the form of religion is adapted to the stage of human progress. Augustine further suggests that Christianity[2] was providentially withheld from those times and places where men were not prepared to believe in it. Men are more disposed to trust their human opinions than to yield themselves to Divine authority. This is exactly the weakness of human nature. Augustine is never tired of urging what his personal experience accentuated, that the incapacity of human intelligence must find its refuge in divinely given truth.

Nevertheless, it must never be forgotten that truth has been revealed to men (sometimes more obviously, sometimes more obscurely) from the very beginning of the human race. Augustine holds that revelation of saving truth has never been withheld from any who was worthy of it.

How Augustine harmonised these comprehensive propositions with the Predestinarian severities of his later career, or with his doctrine of the scanty number of the elect, is not quite obvious. The great writer had a way of flinging out separate aspects of truth and leaving them unreconciled. Hence it is so often possible to quote him in contradictory directions. But while the austere propositions are remembered, the larger and more merciful, not to say more just, ought not to be forgotten.

In reply to the criticism on Jonah and the whale, Augustine observes that ridicule on the subject comes inappropriately from a Pagan who believes miraculous incidents equally startling of such persons as Apollonius of Tyana. The Bishop has no doubt that it is literally true.

He concludes by remarking that to delay faith until detailed criticisms have all been solved is to reverse the

[1] Letter 102, § 13. [2] Letter 102, § 14.

true order. For there are many difficulties which can only be ended by faith. Otherwise life will be ended before faith begins.

Among Augustine's correspondents we find a young man who[1] requests the Bishop to send him explanation of a number of passages in Cicero. The young man was frankly concerned to get a reputation for scholarly attainments. He received in reply a letter of very considerable length, in thirty-four sections, containing many remarks of a sort which he had neither desired nor expected. Augustine was greatly distressed at the young man's vanity, and charged him with being more concerned for reputation than for knowledge. Did he suppose that bishops had nothing better to do than write comments on Cicero? Very unpalatable remarks followed on the emptiness of human praise and the futility of ambition.

Let the young man picture himself with his Ciceronian criticisms solved and his inquiries satisfied.[2] What then? Then he would gain the reputation of being a learned man. But what then? These criticisms are not the fundamental problems of human life. Augustine is clear that young Dioscorus sees things out of all proportion. The essential thing is the Way of Salvation, the Christian Truth. There is no necessity for Dioscorus to teach men the Dialogues of Cicero. A knowledge of controversial errors is of service to the teacher of Christian truth because it enables him to answer objections and remove difficulties. But the main thing is the knowledge of the truth. Augustine seems to have felt that his correspondent was wasting his time on obsolete speculations and philosophical objections which no living person adopted. Dioscorus must learn not to be ashamed to say he does not know. Augustine quotes the example of Themistocles. Themistocles at the feast when asked to sing or play, replied that he

[1] Letter 118, A.D. 410.

[2] Letter 118, § 11.

knew no melody. They asked him, What then did he know? He answered, "I know how to make a small Republic great." Let Dioscorus be prepared to say of many minor matters, I do not know. If asked, What then do you know? let him reply, I know how a man without this knowledge can be blessed.

So Augustine discovers what is the secret of a blessed life. What is the highest good? The answer must be found either in the body, or in the soul, or in God.

Hereupon follows a disquisition on philosophic and Christian schools of thought, much on the lines of the sermon preached by Augustine on S. Paul at Athens (Sermon 150).

The highest good is not to be found in the body,[1] for the soul is the body's superior. It would be senseless to assert that the body is superior to the soul. The soul does not receive the highest good from the body. Not to see this is to be blinded by sensual pleasure.

Neither is the highest good to be found in the soul.[2] Otherwise the soul would never be wretched. Moreover the soul is changeable. At one time it is foolish, at another wise. It cannot find the final good in itself.

Consequently, by elimination of these two, it follows that the supreme good must be found in God: God the immutable.

Here, as constantly, Augustine commends the Platonists.[3] It would not require many changes of ideas to make them Christians.

And here comes the famous passage[4] in commendation of Humility: one of the noblest sentences ever written in praise of that most distinctively Christian Virtue. Dwelling on the thought, What is the way to reach the truth? Augustine writes:

"In that way the first part is humility; the second, humility; the third, humility: and this I would continue

[1] Letter 118, § 14.
[2] Letter 118, § 15.
[3] Letter 118, § 21.
[4] Letter 118, § 22.

to repeat as often as you might ask direction; not that there are no other instructions which may be given, but because, unless humility precede, accompany, and follow every good action which we perform, being at once the object which we keep before our eyes, the support to which we cling, and the monitor by which we are restrained, any good work on which we are congratulating ourselves is wholly wrested from our hand by pride."[1]

This Christian Virtue of Humility is a necessary consequence of the Incarnation. Our Lord was humiliated in order to teach humility.

And here Augustine, in spite of his deprecatory remarks on classical studies, shows a thorough knowledge of Cicero's opinions on the nature of the Deity, and contrasts the Christian doctrine of the personal Word of God, a doctrine which none could realise unless God revealed it.

Then after an acute criticism on Democritus and the theory of the fortuitous concourse of atoms,[2] Augustine asks his correspondent Dioscorus to consider whether any method would be better adapted for the enlightenment of the human race than the Incarnation.[3] For in the Incarnation the Truth itself clothed itself in Manhood (et ipsius in terris personam gerens), taught the ideal, and realised the ideal in Divine deeds. By assent to the authority of the Incarnate One we escape from the reign of perplexity into the atmosphere of pure and perfect truth.

Then with a reference to Plotinus, or rather to his disciples at Rome, the letter closes with an acknowledgment that he has answered some of Dioscorus's inquiries, and deliberately set many aside, and doubtless treated him otherwise than his correspondent desired, but in a manner which he will appreciate as he matures. The

[1] Letter 118, § 22, Cunningham's translation, i. 109.
[2] Letter 118, §§ 28–31.
[3] Letter 118, § 32.

whole reply would have been impossible had not Augustine been at a distance from Hippo recruiting himself after an illness.

Another supporter of the old Pagan religion is met in the person of Volusian. Volusian was a man of distinction, education, and influence, who had succeeded in frustrating many a conversion to Christianity. Volusian's mother was a Christian, and she begged the Tribune Marcellinus to bring what influence he could to bear upon her son. Volusian had come across Augustine and conversed with him on the subject of religion. Volusian was evidently much impressed,[1] and afterwards wrote a letter to the Bishop in which, with much deference and profession of admiration for the Bishop's eloquence, he propounds certain criticisms on the doctrine of the Incarnation.

That the Lord of the Universe should have passed through the process of human beginnings and have been born of a Virgin, and have passed through the successive stages of infancy, childhood, adolescence, and maturity, is to his mind utterly inconceivable. The absence of the Deity from His proper throne is quite incredible. Augustine's ability imposes on him the obligation of a solution to these difficulties. Ignorance may exist in other priests without detriment to their religious functions, but when Augustine is approached there is no room for ignorance to exist. With which elaborate compliment his letter closes.

Marcellinus had written[2] privately to Augustine begging him to answer Volusian's criticisms.

To Volusian's inquiries Augustine accordingly replies,[3] insisting first that the Christian doctrine is so profound that if a man studies it from early youth to decrepit old age, with the concentration of all his powers, it may still be truly said that when he has finished he has only begun.

Volusian is bidden first to understand what the

[1] Letter 135. A.D. 412. [2] Letter 136. [3] Letter 137. A.D. 412.

Christian doctrine is. The doctrine of the Incarnation does not mean that the Person Who became Man[1] and was born of a Virgin abandoned the direction of the Universe, or was limited to the space of an infant's body. God cannot be estimated by physical dimensions. He is not contained in space like water, or air, or light. He comes without departing whence He was, and departs without abandoning whence He came.[2]

If the human mind marvels at these propositions and is disposed to discredit them, Augustine advises Volusian to consider the marvels involved in the relations of body and spirit in himself, and how totally inexplicable it all is. And let him be prepared for the probability of greater mysteries in Deity.

Thus, in Augustine's view, the narrow limits of our knowledge of ourselves, which is not infrequently urged as a proof of our incapacity for any real knowledge of God, should rather lead us to accept on the authority of revelation, facts in the Godhead which we could not otherwise ascertain. If our human limitations are an argument against knowledge they are an incentive to faith. It is instructive to notice that Augustine draws exactly the opposite inference to that which is commonly drawn from the acknowledged fact of our limitations.

God comes by self-manifestation. He departs by self-concealment. But He is present whether manifest or concealed.[3]

Thus there are no such consequences involved in Incarnation as Volusian supposes. As to the mysterious nature of Incarnation and of the Virgin Birth, "if the reason of this event is required, it would cease to be miraculous. If a parallel is demanded, it would cease to be unique." Augustine was afterwards challenged for this statement. He explained that he did not mean

[1] Deus infusus carni.

[2] Letter 137. Novit ubique totus esse, et nullo contineri loco ; novit venire non recedendo uti erat ; novit abere non deserendo quo venerat.

[3] Letter 137, § 7.

by this statement that a miracle is an event which has no reason. "I said this," he wrote, "not because the event was without a reason, but because the reason of it is concealed." (Letter 161.) "Let it be granted that God is able to do what transcends our comprehension." Further he maintains Mary's perpetual Virginity.

The gradual transition of Christ through the stages of human life was a necessity of His Mediation.[1] Had it been otherwise the inference must have been the unreality of His Manhood.

Some, observes Augustine,[2] insist on demanding an explanation of the manner in which God was blended with Man[3] to make One Person in Christ. As if they were able to explain what is of daily occurrence: the manner in which body and soul are blended to make one person in man.

Accordingly, the great writer tells Volusian what Incarnation means.[4] It is essentially that the Word of God took Manhood (suscepit hominem) and made Himself one with it: equal to the Father according to His Divinity, and less than the Father according to the Flesh. We notice here, as so often, phrases which are almost identical with the Athanasian formula.[5] This action of the Word of God occurred at the time which He knew to be most appropriate and had eternally determined.

The two main purposes of the Incarnation are in Augustine's view Instruction and Strength (Magisterium; Adjutorium).

1. Enlightenment, instruction, came by Christ. Truths, indeed, had been already before the Incarnation taught to men: partly by the sacred Prophets, partly also by Pagan philosophers and poets, who mingled much truth with elements which are false. But the Incarnation confirmed what was true by God's own authority.

[1] Letter 137, § 9. [2] Letter 137, § 11.
[3] Letter 137. Quomodo Deus homini permixtus sit.
[4] Letter 137, § 12. [5] Cf. esp. the Treatise on the Trinity.

Although the Truth before He became incarnate presented Himself to all who were capable of receiving truth.

2. But not only is enlightenment a purpose of the Incarnation. The other main purpose is strength or help. For without grace no one can overcome evil desires.

If objectors urge "that the authority of Christ was not shown with sufficient distinctness above the miraculous powers which existed under the Jewish dispensation," Augustine points to the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, as the supreme instances, unparalleled manifestations of power.

Augustine here draws a brilliant outline of the preparations for Christ in history. The call of Abraham, the selection of Israel, its training, its discipline, its failings, and its receptiveness down to the Incarnation of Christ. Prophets, priesthood, sacrifices, and the Temple itself, were all Sacraments or sacred signs of that crowning event.

To these preparations succeeded the realisation. Christ appeared. His life, words, deeds, suffering, death and Resurrection and Ascension, correspond and fulfil the anticipations. Then came the descent of the Spirit and the work of the Church. Augustine describes in eloquent terms the Church's growth and influence, the opposition of the Pagan world, and the strange evidential position of the Jews. The chosen people dethroned, dispersed, carrying everywhere their sacred books which are evidences to the truth of Christianity. They are the Church's librarians, bearing the books which are only explicable in the light of Christianity. The very heresies which oppose the name of Christ do in reality support that against which they contend. Thus everything converges and contributes to verify the truth of the Catholic Religion.

This remarkable letter, written in the year 412, was produced while the writer's mind was full of his great reply to Paganism which appeared later in the work on

The City of God. The letter to Volusian has been rightly regarded as an outline or preliminary sketch of that masterly production.

When Augustine had been a bishop some years he received a curious letter of friendly congratulation from the Pagans of Madaura, a place familiar to the readers of the *Confessions* as the school where he was placed in preparation for higher studies at Carthage. Madaura was near to Hippo. It was the place from which he had to be withdrawn owing to the narrow resources[1] of his family. The Pagans of Madaura evidently wanted to conciliate this powerful opponent, and fellow-countryman, the Christian Bishop. They addressed him in phrases which had a Christian sound, wished him eternal salvation in the Lord, and added, "We wish that for many years your lordship may always, in the midst of your clergy, be glad in God and His Christ."

Augustine in his reply declares that at first[2] he thought himself reading a letter composed by Christians, and supposed that the people of Madaura had become converted. He objected greatly to their misleading use of Christian expressions. Referring to the closing of the Pagan sanctuaries by the laws of the Emperor Honorius, he told them that Paganism was more easily excluded from their temples than from their hearts.

Augustine appealed to the dispersion of the Jews;[3] to the marvellous rise and extension of Christianity; to the fulfilment of predictions with regard to heresies and schisms from the Christian society; to the Apostolic Sees and the succession of bishops; to the overthrow of idols; to the Pagan temples falling into ruin and neglect; to the State accepting the religion of men who died for the truth; the chief of the noblest empire in the world laying aside his crown and kneeling as a suppliant at the tomb of the fisherman Peter.

[1] *Confessions*, II. 5, p. 154.
[2] Letter 232, p. 1279.
[3] Letter 232, § 3.

Augustine assures these unfortunate Pagans, who after all were only maintaining the religion of their fathers, that not one of them will be able in the last judgment to plead anything in defence of his unbelief. He tells them that they cannot avoid mentioning the name of Christ. The Pagan flatterer and the Christian worshipper both repeat the name: "Christianus venerator, et paganus adulator"; but they will have to give account for their use of it.

After these warnings as to their spiritual peril,[1] Augustine proceeds to give an exposition of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is represented [2] as the supreme revelation of lowliness and of gentleness, and therefore the remedy for human pride and violence. God subduing us by persuasion, not by force, through the amazing act of Divine condescension. They are not bidden to contemplate an imperial Christ, nor a wealthy Christ, nor a prosperous Christ, but a Crucified Christ. For there is nothing more powerful than the humility of God.

Then the letter closes with an appeal to the people of Madaura as his fellow-citizens who have given him this opportunity of speaking to Pagans something concerning Christ.

It was the Pagan people themselves who made this overture and gave the Bishop his opportunity. At other times Augustine himself took the initiative.[3] We find him writing to ask Longinian, a Pagan philosopher, what he thought concerning Christ. That the philosopher regards Christ with reverence he is aware. What he desires to know is whether Longinian regards Christ's teaching as the only way to a blessed life. The date of this letter is unknown.

Longinian, in an interesting reply,[4] gives the contemporary Pagan view. He writes with evident em-

[1] Letter 232, § 5.
[2] Letter 232, § 6.
[3] Letter 233.
[4] Letter 234.

barrassment. For Paganism is now discountenanced by imperial law. Longinian is himself a Platonist and a believer in God. The approach to God is through righteous acts and words. And by aid of the lesser divinities whom the Christians call Angels, men are intended to reach the one ineffable Creator. There is need for this purpose of purification and of expiation, of self-discipline and self-control.

But as to the Christ by whom Augustine and the Christians feel themselves sure to reach the supreme Father of all, Longinian confesses he is perplexed, he knows not what to say. He has great regard for Augustine and his religious aspirations.

Longinian's answer encouraged Augustine to write again,[1] partly on account of the philosopher's cautious attitude of suspense. He rejoiced that Longinian would neither rashly assent nor deny anything concerning Christ. He rejoices that Longinian is willing to read what Augustine has written on the subject. There is one point, however, on which he desires further discussion. Longinian maintains that purification by sacred rites, expiation by sacrifice, is part of the way of approach to the one Father of the gods. But if a man requires to be purified by sacrifice, then he is not yet pure; and if he is not yet pure, he is not living the righteous life. Augustine desires to know what place Longinian assigns to sacrificial cleansing in the development of a religious life.

Longinian's reply unfortunately does not exist. It will not escape the reader how keenly Augustine seizes on the central question of expiation, as a Pagan acknowledgment of personal imperfection and of human inability to reach the Divine unaided; how he passes by subordinate interests, and fixes attention on the one subject which seems to promise best a way to appreciate Christian principles.

[1] Letter 235.

A letter of Augustine's to Bishop Deuterius[1] shows us something of the intrusion of non-Christian principles into the Church. It appears that a certain sub-deacon named Victorinus, a man advanced in years, was secretly an adherent of the Manichæan heresy. Augustine had deposed him on his own admission. Victorinus was a Manichæan of the preliminary class called "Hearers." He had not been admitted to be one of the "Elect." Augustine's object in mentioning this to Deuterius is to warn him against admitting Victorinus among his penitents. Augustine further takes the opportunity of explaining to Deuterius the main practices of the Manichæans. He informs him that the Hearers are permitted to eat flesh and to marry, neither of which things are permitted to the Elect. They say prayers to the sun and the moon, they fast on the Lord's Day, they deny the doctrine of the Virgin Birth and the reality of the Incarnation. They neither believe in the Passion nor in the Resurrection. They hold that the Jewish Law is a product of the Prince of Darkness. They believe that animals as well as men have souls, and that souls are a part of God. They hold that the good and the evil principles have become intermingled and confused; that the good is to be liberated by the wholesome action of the sun and the moon, and that such part of the Divine nature as cannot be extricated from this confusion will be condemned for ever.

[1] Letter 236.

CHAPTER III

LETTERS ON THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

A LETTER to Nebridius[1] is important because it shows that the problems of the doctrine of the Trinity, which were afterwards to mature in Augustine's wonderful treatise, were already occupying his mind some two years after his conversion. Already he was discussing how to reconcile the inseparability of the Persons in the Trinity with the fact that the Son alone became incarnate.

Count Pascentius was an Arian who boldly attacked the Catholic belief, and exerted much influence over clergy of the less instructed sort. Pascentius set himself in opposition to Augustine at a conference in Carthage, where he assembled a number of leading people. Augustine demanded that shorthand writers should be admitted in order to secure an accurate report of the discussion.[2] Pascentius objected to this, apparently on the ground that it was not legal for a person in his official position. Accordingly the proceedings had to be of a private nature. They were, as might be expected, utterly unsatisfactory.

In an account of the incident,[3] Augustine complains that Pascentius propounded propositions to which he did not adhere; made dogmatic statements in the morning and changed the wording in the afternoon. When the discussion began, Count Pascentius affirmed faith in God the Father Almighty unbegotten, and in

[1] Letter 11, A.D. 389.
[2] *Vita*, auctore Possidio, § 19.
[3] Letter 238.

Jesus Christ His Son, God born before the ages, by Whom all things were made; and in the Holy Spirit.

Augustine on hearing this replied that he was prepared to endorse this statement of faith.

Pascentius then proceeded to denounce[1] the use of the term Homoousion, and to require to be shown that it was a scriptural expression.

Augustine claimed that the proper course would be first to ascertain what the expression means, and then to consider whether it could be found in the Scriptures. For men ought to contend for principles and not for words.

However, as Pascentius refused to allow this course, Augustine asked whether the phrase which Pascentius himself had formulated, that the Father is unbegotten, can be found in Scripture. And if it could, whether Pascentius would kindly indicate the passage. To this it was replied, "Do you then believe that the Father was begotten?" Augustine answered "No." To which his opponent replied, "Then if He is not begotten He must be unbegotten." Augustine thereupon rejoined, "You see then that a reason may be given to justify the use of a term which is not in Scripture."[2] A similar justification may be made for the term Homoousion.

The Arians could not answer this. But in the Conference in the afternoon they withdrew their own expression that the Father was unbegotten, and called on Augustine to formulate his own belief. But Augustine insisted that they must deal with Pascentius's own declaration. Pascentius accordingly repeated his principles, but omitted the terms employed before about the Father. This of course made any definite discussion hopeless.

Pascentius then descended to personalities about Augustine's intellectual reputation. The meeting broke up having accomplished nothing.

Augustine subsequently sent Pascentius an exposition

[1] Letter 238, § 4. [2] Letter 238, § 5.

of the Catholic Belief.[1] Here he expressed his faith in the One God and the Only Begotten Son, and in the Spirit Who is the Spirit[2] both of God the Father and of His Only Begotten Son. The Scripture phrase, "Who only hath immortality,"[3] applies not only to the Father but also to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The Father and the Son are one God. As Christ Himself said: "I and my Father are One." Fatherhood and Sonship are relative attributes.[4] But the Substance of the Godhead is One. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three Gods, but one God.[5] The Son of Man and the Son of God are identical. This is only another way of affirming the Incarnation.[6] The Lord, thy God, is one Lord. But when S. Thomas exclaimed "My Lord and my God!" Christ, so far from rebuking him, commended him; for He answered, "Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed." Thus the Father is Lord and God; the Son also is Lord and God; and yet the Lord thy God is one Lord. "To us there is but one God, the Father . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6).

And the Son of God became the Son of Man, not by changing what He was, but by assuming what He was not.[7] Moreover, the Father was never without His Son any more than the eternal light can be without its brightness.[8] The generation of the Son must be eternal.

Augustine informs Pascentius that this is his faith. As to the claim that Pascentius has refuted Augustine, the real question is whether the Homoousion is refuted.[9] It is easy for men to ridicule a great word which they do not understand. But let them look at the Scripture words: "I and my Father are One." What else can that mean but that they are of one and the same substance?

[1] Letter 238, § 10.
[2] Letter 238, § 10.
[3] Letter 238, § 11.
[4] Letter 238, § 14.
[5] Letter 258, § 16.
[6] Letter 238, § 18.
[7] Letter 238, § 21.
[8] Letter 238, § 24.
[9] Letter 238, § 28.

Augustine wrote a second letter,[1] reminding Pascentius how greatly the Arian had changed the wording of his profession of faith.

One version of it was, "I believe in God the Father Who made the Son first of the creatures before all other creatures; and in the Son Who is neither equal to the Father nor like Him nor true God; and in the Holy Spirit Who was made after the Son and by the Son." If this is Pascentius's Creed, Augustine desires to know how he proposes to defend it out of the Scriptures?

The other version was, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, invisible, immortal, unbegotten, of Whom are all things; and in His Son Jesus Christ, God born before the ages, by Whom all things were made. And in the Holy Spirit."

This version Augustine can accept. It appears that the Arian was prepared to believe in the Virgin Birth.

To these letters Count Pascentius wrote a short contemptuous reply,[2] in which he expresses regret that Augustine has not abandoned his errors, but makes no attempt to discuss either Augustine's faith or his own. All he does is to throw out a question. If there are Three, which of them is God? Or is there *una persona triformis?*

Augustine hastens to reply that he does not maintain a *triformis persona.* There is one form because there is one Deity.

It is curious that in these letters Augustine says nothing of the psychological and moral arguments which involve a Trinity, and which occupy so important a place in the Bishop's great treatise on this doctrine.

What was the outcome of the correspondence is unknown. It may have served some purpose in supporting Catholics at Carthage.

A thoughtful correspondent named Consentius sent for Augustine's inspection and revision an outline of

[1] Letter 239. [2] Letter 240.

his ideas about the Trinity.[1] He held that the truth in things divine was rather to be perceived by faith than by reason. For if the Doctrine of the Church was derived from the discussions of reason rather than from the assent of faith, Religion would be rather the privilege of the philosophic few than of the unlearned many. But since God was pleased to choose the weak things of this world whereby to confound the strong, and to save believers by the foolishness of the Christian preaching, it was clear that we were not so much to depend on reason as on the authority of the saints.

Consentius thereupon proceeded to propound distinctions between the Divine Substance and the Divine Persons.

Augustine in reply observes[2] that Consentius asks him to discuss the oneness of the Deity and the distinctions of the persons. Yet Consentius himself urges that we ought rather to follow the authority of the Saints than the inference of reason. But if the stress is thus to be laid on authority why should Consentius appeal to Augustine for reasons? The truth is, that both faith and reason have their function. Let him hold the doctrine by faith, and endeavour to apprehend it by reason. God does not endow us with reason without intending it to be used.[3] The exercise of faith presupposes a rational intelligence. Faith comes first because there are things which reason cannot as yet perceive. But reason must be exercised on the contents of faith. There are things concerning which a rational explanation cannot be given;[4] not because it does not exist, but because we have not yet discovered it. Faith prepares the mind for intellectual appreciation.

Contemplating therefore the doctrine of the Trinity in the light of these presuppositions, we are not to shrink from the use of reason but only from its abuses.

[1] Letter 119.
[2] Letter 120.
[3] Letter 120, § 3.
[4] Letter 120, § 5.

Thus the theory that the Son is inferior to the Father is not to be rejected because it is rationalising but because it is false reasoning.[1]

To avoid false reasoning it is essential to rid the mind of material and spacial analogies.[2] The Trinity is not to be conceived as three individuals in spacial juxtaposition. Nor is the Divinity to be regarded as a fourth element beyond the Trinity. Nor are the Three Persons to be regarded as existing nowhere but in Heaven while the Deity itself is regarded as everywhere present. All these theories are to be completely abandoned and dispelled.

What is to be maintained is this: that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are the Trinity and yet one God;[3] that there is not a fourth element of Deity in addition to the Trinity. All corporeal similitudes are to be avoided, rejected and cast out. Augustine warns against the danger of materialistic conceptions of Deity by a string of imperatives: abige, abnue, nega, respice, abjice, fuge. And this rejection of the false is a great step towards acceptance of the true. For it is no small beginning of the Knowledge of God if, before we can know what He is, we begin to know what He is not.

And further, the theory which locates the substance of the Father exclusively in Heaven,[4] while it ascribes ubiquity to the Deity; as if the Trinity were localised and material, while the Deity was everywhere present as incorporeal; this theory is to be unquestionably repudiated.

The true doctrine is that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is a Trinity and is one God. For it is inseparably of one and the same substance, or more properly, essence.[5] There is no other essence of God beside the Trinity.

[1] Letter 120, § 6.
[2] Letter 120, § 7.
[3] Letter 120, § 13.
[4] Letter 120, § 16.
[5] Letter 120, § 17.

Materialistic conceptions of God's Nature appear to have been popular in Africa among Churchmen as well as beyond the Church's limits. Augustine wrote several times on the Vision of God, insisting that God cannot either here or hereafter be seen by bodily eyes. It appears that a certain African bishop was greatly offended by a letter in which Augustine refuted such materialistic views. Augustine in a characteristic letter[1] to Bishop Fortunatianus requests the recipient to intervene in his behalf with the offended person, asking his forgiveness for any want of consideration in the letter which, however, he does not regret having written. The substance of his former teaching on the Vision of God is reinforced and supported by quotations from Ambrose; from Jerome, whom he calls holy and a man of God; from Athanasius; and finally from a writing, which Augustine ascribes to Gregory, a holy Eastern bishop, but which as a fact appears to have been a Latin composition mistakenly incorporated among Gregory Nazianzen's genuine discourses.[2]

Augustine writes earnestly warning against the anthropomorphic tendencies of the popular theology. The entire physical terminology of Scripture by which God is represented must be interpreted in an allegorical way. Thus, the Wings of God signify Protection; and the Hands of God, His Working; and the Eyes of God, His Knowledge. This interpretation, Augustine assures his reader, is traditional and no invention of his own.[3]

This leads him to dwell on the difference between the authority of Scripture and the authority of Catholic expositors.

"The reasonings of any men whatsoever, even though they be Catholics, and of high reputation, are not to be treated by us in the same way as the Canonical Scriptures are treated. We are at liberty, without doing

[1] Letter 148, A.D. 413. [2] cf. p. 15. [3] Letter 148, § 13.

any violence to the respect which these men deserve, to condemn and reject anything in their writings, if perchance we shall find that they have entertained opinions differing from that which others or we ourselves have, by the Divine help, discovered to be the truth. I deal thus with the writings of others, and I wish my intelligent readers to deal thus with mine."[1]

And here comes a remarkable passage on the Resurrection Body of Christians.[2] "As to the spiritual body which we shall have in the resurrection, how great a change for the better it is to undergo: whether it shall become pure spirit, so that the whole man shall then be a spirit, or shall (as I rather think, but do not yet confidently affirm) become a spiritual body in such a way as to be called spiritual because of a certain ineffable facility in its movements, but at the same time to retain its material substance,"—Augustine confesses that he had not read anything sufficiently established to be made the basis of instruction.

This last paragraph deserves serious attention. It was written about the year 413. It is incomparably less materialistic and less confident than the teaching given in the closing books of the work on the City of God (*De Civ. Dei*, XXII. 12 ff. p. 1077). There is an openness of mind and a cautiousness of expression in the letter which is sadly lacking in the later treatise. The final book on the City of God was probably written some twelve years later than the letter, but it reveals a harder doctrine contrasting unfavourably with the passage here. In the City of God Augustine considers that the measure of the stature of Christ is the physical height to which those who died in infancy will grow.

Evodius, Augustine's friend, frequently sent the Bishop strings of questions to explain. Out of one series Augustine selected two: one concerning the

[1] Letter 148, § 15. Cunningham's translation.
[2] Letter 148, § 16.

Holy Trinity, another concerning the appearance of a Dove at the Baptism of our Lord.[1]

This letter is also of interest owing to the information it gives about the progress of Augustine's literary labours. He tells Evodius that he has now finished the first five books of the treatise on the City of God. These five are an answer to those who consider that Pagan divinities are to be worshipped for the sake of advantages in the present world. He will next proceed to answer those who maintain that Pagan divinities are to be worshipped for the sake of advantages in the world to come. He has also dictated three expositions on the Psalms, and is being pressed urgently to dictate more. Meanwhile the books on the Trinity which have been long in hand are still delayed. Augustine thinks they will not be intelligible to many persons. More widely useful works may, therefore, rightly take precedence.

Augustine begins by correcting a misapprehension by Evodius of a text in S. Paul. Evodius applies the words: "He that is ignorant shall be ignored" (1 Cor. xiv. 38), to those who are unable to discern the unity of the Trinity in the same manner as the unity of memory, understanding, and will in the human soul is discussed. Augustine advises Evodius to consult the original passage again. He will then realise that the reference is to persons who caused disorder by their insubordinate use of spiritual gifts within the Church. Such persons should be ignored, that is rejected.

Augustine warns Evodius[2] against supplying this sentence to persons of small intellectual insight. If Christ died only for the intellectually discerning, the labour of the Church is almost in vain. The fact is, that throngs of simple-minded folk without much intellectual power crowd in to the Great Physician and are cured by the Crucified: while some, who pride

[1] Letter 169, A.D. 415. [2] Letter 169, § 4.

themselves on their intellectual ability, wander far away from the path that leads to eternal life.

What, then, we Christians must firmly hold and believe concerning the Trinity is this: We must believe in one God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. At the same time we must believe "that the Son is not He Who is the Father, and the Father is not He Who is the Son, and neither the Father nor the Son is He Who is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son." "Let no separation be imagined to exist in this Trinity either in time or space; but that these Three are equal and co-eternal, and absolutely of one nature; and that the creatures one and all which have been created or are being created subsist in the Trinity as their Creator; not that some were created by the Father and some by the Son and some by the Holy Spirit; also that no one is saved by the Father without the Son and the Holy Spirit, or by the Son without the Father and the Holy Spirit, or by the Holy Spirit without the Father and the Son; but by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the only one true and truly immortal (that is, absolutely unchangeable) God."[1] Nevertheless, adds Augustine, many things are said in Scripture concerning each of the Three separately, teaching us that although the Trinity is inseparable, at the same time it is a Trinity.

Thus, at the Baptism of Christ, the Father is heard in the Voice, the Son is seen in the human nature, the Spirit in the bodily form of a Dove. The Three are present separately but they are not separated.

Augustine illustrates this by the co-existence of memory, understanding and will in the human soul.[2] He warns Evodius, however, that the illustration is imperfect, for whereas these three human faculties are not the soul but exist in the soul "the Trinity does not exist in God but is God." The point of the illustration

[1] Letter 169, § 5.

[2] Letter 169, § 6.

is that as in man so in God the three are inseparable in operation.

In the scene at the Baptism of Christ the Voice is not permanently united with the person of the Father,[1] nor the Dove with the person of the Holy Spirit. Both the sound and the appearance passed away. It is the manhood alone (for whose deliverance the entire dispensation was brought about), which was brought into unity with the person of the Word of God, by a wondrous and unique assumption. Nevertheless the Word remains in His own nature immutable. The human nature came to the Word. The Word did not come to the human nature by a process of change. Thus He continues to be the Son of God while He has assumed humanity.[2]

Thus the assumption of humanity by the Word,[3] or Son of God, has made no increase in the number of the persons. The Trinity remains a Trinity still. For just as in every man, that one alone excepted Whom He assumed into union with Himself, the soul and body constitute one person, so in Christ the Word and His human soul and body constitute one person.[4]

This unity of person makes it possible to speak concerning the Son of God under either of the two natures, either as human or divine. Then it is correct to say that God was crucified, just as you say a philosopher dies, although that is only true of him in his body, and not in his mind.

[1] Letter 169, § 7.

[2] Letter 169, § 7. Solus homo, quia propter ipsam naturam liberandam illa omnia fiebant, in unitatem personæ Verbi Dei, hoc est unici Filii Dei, mirabili et singulari susceptione coaptatus est, permanente tamen Verbo in sua natura incommutabiliter . . . Homo autem Verbo accessit, non Verbum in hominem convertibiliter accessit . . .

[3] Letter 169, § 8.

[4] Non enim homine assumpto personarum numerus auctus est, sed eadem Trinitas mansit. Nam sicut in homine quolibet, præter unum illum qui singulariter susceptus est, anima et corpus una persona est ; ita in Christo Verbum et homo una persona est.

Towards the close of this letter[1] Augustine informs Evodius that he has written to Jerome concerning the origin of the soul. Jerome had maintained the creationist theory that a new soul is created at every birth. Augustine desires to be informed how this theory can be harmonised with the doctrine of original sin.

A studious young Spaniard, the priest Orosius, was at this time (A.D. 415) on a visit to Augustine to consult him on the heresy of the Priscillianists and concerning some opinions of Origen which the Church had not accepted. Augustine induced Orosius to go to Palestine on a visit to Jerome. So he became Augustine's letter carrier.

The sequel will be found in the correspondence with Jerome.

This does not complete the list of Augustine's occupations. He has also written a book against Pelagianism at the request of some of the brethren who had been led astray into that error. The book was apparently the treatise on Nature and Grace. If Evodius wants these books Augustine advises him to send a copyist. Meanwhile for himself the great writer, evidently a little wearied, pleads to be left uninterrupted to study matters urgently necessary and in his opinion more important than some of Evodius's questions, which are of interest to very few.

There is an interesting letter written by Alypius[2] and Augustine to Maximus, a physician recently converted from the Arian heresy to the Catholic Faith, urging upon him to impart to others the truth which he now accepts. It is noteworthy that Augustine puts first the Unity of God. There is only one God to Whom divine worship is due. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve. But divine worship is not only due to the Father, but also to the Son. And this can only be the case because both Father and Son

[1] Letter 169, § 13. [2] Letter 170

are included within the Divine Unity. There is moreover the Holy Spirit to Whom also divine worship is due. The Unity includes a Trinity. The Son is of the Substance of the Father; eternal as the Father is. There is no temporal priority. The Father was never without the Son. Augustine illustrates by the light which is co-equal with the flame. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

This Trinity is of one and the same nature and substance. It is not less in each than in all. God is neither confusedly One nor separatedly Three. (Nec confuse unum sunt, nec disjuncte tria sunt.)

The letter is chiefly concerned with explaining that like generates like;[1] that the son of a man has the qualities of his father, and the Son of God the qualities of His Father. Thus the Son of God is the Father's equal. This equality is inherent and essential. It is not something subsequently acquired, as of one who, being naturally unequal, rose to equality.

Also when it is said "the Father is greater than I" the reference is to the Son as Incarnate.[2] Whereas "I and my Father are One" refers to the Son in His own self.

Augustine pleads most earnestly with the convert to instruct his former associates and to bring them into the Catholic Faith.

Leporius was a Gallican monk condemned by certain Bishops of his country of erroneous opinions about the Incarnation. He was sent to Hippo to be instructed by Augustine and if possible to be reclaimed. Augustine succeeded in convincing him. Leporius was ready to believe that the Word was God, but not that the Word became flesh. He denied that God was made man. The ground of this denial was a fear of introducing mortality into the substance of God. Incarnation seemed to him to detract from the equality of the Word

[1] Letter 170, § 8.

[2] Letter 170, § 9.

with God the Father. Augustine showed him that, in his anxiety to maintain the immortality of God, he had in reality introduced a fourth person into the Trinity. For he had elevated the Man Jesus to a level with Deity while denying that Jesus was the Word made flesh. Augustine has explained the position very briefly, but this appears to be the essence of Leporius's view and of his own reply to it.

Augustine wrote to the Gallican Bishops, Procopius and Cylinnius,[1] certifying that Leporius was now orthodox. Leporius openly recanted his error. He is mentioned by Cassian in his work on the Incarnation,[2] and by others, with admiration, as a man of exemplary life, and was afterwards raised to the priesthood.

[1] Letter 219, A.D. 427.
[2] Gaume, I. 4. *See* Appendix to Augustine. Tom. X. p. 2398.

[These letters on the Christian doctrine concerning God should only be taken as an introduction to the great writer's teaching in his *Confessions*, in his *Expositions of St. John's Gospel*, and above all in the *Treatise on the Trinity*.]

CHAPTER IV

LETTERS ON AFRICAN CHURCH DIVISIONS[1]

To appreciate Augustine's letters on African Church Divisions it is necessary to recall the principal facts of their history prior to Augustine's time.

The divisions had existed since A.D. 311. It was one of the indirect results of the Diocletian persecution in A.D. 305. In that persecution many an African Christian failed. The clergy were required to surrender their sacred books to be destroyed. Mensurius, Primate, Bishop of Carthage, instead of yielding the Scriptures, presented a quantity of heretical writing to the magistrates, who, on being informed of the Primate's subtlety, refused to allow further investigation. So Mensurius escaped. If his measures were unheroic they were prudent. He did his utmost to discourage a fanaticism in the Church which courted danger, and provoked an ordeal which it might not have the power to endure. In these measures he was throughout supported by his Archdeacon Cæcilian.

Now there existed among the bishops of the Province

[1] Help will be found on this subject in the following works :
Noris, *Historia Donatistarum*, ed. Ballerini. 4 Vols. Verona 1732.
Morcelli, *Africa Christiana*, 3 Vols. 1816.
Reuter, *Augustinische Studien.*
Ribbeck, *Donatismus*, 1858.
Monceaux, Article "L'Eglise Donatiste avant S. Augustine," in the *Révue de l'Histoire des Religions.* July 1909. *Histoire Litteraire de l'Afrique Chrétienne*, 4 Vols. 1915.

of Numidia a long-standing jealousy of the See of Carthage, which in reality held a sort of patriarchal position without the title. The conduct of Mensurius was most unfavourably represented among the Numidian bishops.

In 311 Mensurius died, and his Archdeacon Cæcilian was consecrated by Felix Bishop of Aptunga, to take his place, without consulting the bishops of Numidia. But the Numidian bishops refused to acknowledge him. They assembled at Carthage and held a Council in which they complained (1) that the consecration of Cæcilian was irregular because according to custom the proper consecrator of the Bishop of Carthage was the Primate of Numidia; (2) that in any case Cæcilian was an impossible candidate, because he was a Traditor; that is, he had surrendered the Sacred Scripture to the Pagan magistrates in the days of the persecution. There is irresistible evidence that the conduct of some of Cæcilian's accusers, the Numidian bishops, during that same period would not bear investigation. None the less they refused to acknowledge him, and ordered him to appear before their Council; which he refused to do. Accordingly they proceeded to elect another bishop for Carthage. They consecrated Majorinus, a reader of the Carthaginian Church, whose candidature was supported by the wealth and influence of a lady named Lucilla whom Bishop Cæcilian had mortally offended by objecting to her devotional esteem for some questionable relics, which he regarded as little better than superstition. Majorinus was a mere figurehead, a nonentity. In a few months he died and was replaced by Donatus, a powerful, commanding personality who gave not only his influence but also his name to the Sect.

Meanwhile the Emperor Constantine acknowleged Cæcilian and ordered his officials to support him against the Separatists.

Thereupon the Separatists appealed to the Emperor through the Proconsul at Carthage requesting Constantine to submit the dispute to a Synod of Gallican

bishops, on the ground that such a Synod would be impartial, seeing that Gaul had been exempt from the persecution. To this appeal Constantine consented. He selected three Gallican bishops together with Pope Melchiades and other Italian bishops, making in all a Council of seventeen which was held at Rome in 313. By that Council of the Lateran Cæcilian was acquitted.

From that first decision the Separatists appealed to Constantine again. They complained that in the Council in Rome no inquiry had been made into the qualifications of Cæcilian's consecrator, Felix of Aptunga, whom they asserted to be also a Traditor. Accordingly Constantine ordered inquiry to be made by the Proconsul Ælian at Carthage. Ælian acquitted Felix of the accusation made against him. Constantine then had the whole subject brought before the Council of Arles in 314. Here for the second time Cæcilian was declared to be innocent.

For the third time the Separatists appealed. They now requested the Emperor to take the matter into his own hands. Accordingly Constantine decided at Milan in 316 that Cæcilian was duly and regularly elected and consecrated, and was the lawful Bishop of Carthage.

Constantine then attempted coercive measures to suppress the Schism. The usual result of coercion followed. The Separatists had now their persecuted and their martyrs, and the spirit of their community was intensified even to a fanatical degree.

Then arose in Africa that extraordinary band of religious furies known as the Circumcellions, who terrorised the villages[1] and waylaid travellers with clubs and afterwards with swords, beating and wounding all Catholics who had the misfortune to come within their reach. These *Agonistici* consisted chiefly of the submerged element of the African population, the social failures, impecunious colonists, runaway slaves, the

[1] Aug. *Contra Ep. Parmen.* i. 17, 18, and Letter 23, § 6. 7. Letter 133, § 1. ff.

unemployed, the discontented, who gathered in formidable groups to the destruction of social order and civilised existence (Letter 108, § 18). They robbed the inhabitants and threatened their lives. They ill-treated the clergy and attacked the Churches: self-constituted defenders of the Donatist Communion against the ancient Church of the land. They freely shed the blood of Church-people to the glory of God.

The Roman Imperial authorities in Africa were quite unequal to their task, and were dismayed by the consequences of the persecution which they had instituted. After some five years of utter distraction, hostility was suspended. In 321 Constantine allowed a contemptuous peace. The Donatists had in reality gained their way. Imperial vacillation promoted their increase. In the year 326 they were so strong that they assembled a Council of 270 Donatist bishops at Carthage; so that they clearly existed in opposition to the Catholic Church in almost every place of much importance in North Africa.

No Church outside Africa acknowledged them, whereas the Church over which Cæcilian presided was in communion with all the ancient Churches of the World. The Donatists attempted to establish a Church in Rome, which, however, could but maintain a struggling and precarious existence on a hill and in a cave, while it set up a rival against the Roman Bishop. Elsewhere the Donatists made overtures to the Arians and for that purpose offered doctrinal reductions concerning the Trinity.

Under the successors of Constantine fresh attempts were made by Imperial power to bring the two Churches into union, chiefly in the interests of social peace. But history does not encourage political efforts at ecclesiastical unity. A state official, whose name became notorious in Africa, Macarius, was commissioned to bring the Separatists into union with the Church by all possible means. He attempted bribery. He resorted to force.

He failed in both. He interviewed the Chief of the Community at Carthage, but Donatus scorned his overtures. What has the Emperor, he asked, to do with the Church? Donatus wrote a circular to all his subordinates prohibiting all relations with the State official. An Imperial Edict of Union was issued in 347. This promoted quiet when the Donatists were weak; but when they were strong it intensified strife. Macarius at times lost self-control and resorted to violence. The result was more martyrs for the Sect. The Catholics were now nicknamed the Macarian Church. The period was long after called in Augustine's time the Macarian period, the Macarian persecution.[1] Donatus was exiled and other leaders after him.

Catholics began to think that unity was restored. Their feelings are described in the pages of the contemporary historian Optatus. But the victory was only superficial: peace was but partial. Underneath the apparent quiet simmered the old resentment awaiting or rather preparing for retaliation. These were the days in which the Donatists composed their records of the Macarian persecution. The *Passio Mercuti* relates how a Donatist bishop died.

Then came the Donatist opportunity. The accession of Julian reversed all Christian prospects. In 362 he decreed that the Donatists might return, and ordered the restitution of their Churches. The scenes that followed baffle description.[2] The *Agonistici* revived. Retaliations everywhere occurred on the Catholic occupants of the property of which the Donatists had been for years deprived. The Reserved Sacrament in Catholic Churches was flung to the dogs, the altars scraped. Consecrated Virgins were insulted and injured, clergy were wounded and sometimes killed. The wildest and most atrocious incidents are recorded.

The reign of terror ceased with Julian's death in 363,

[1] Letter 87, § 10. Letter 49, § 3. [2] Letter 105, § 9.

after less than two years. Edicts of Valentinian, of Gratian and of Theodosius, were all adverse to the Donatist cause.[1]

Such were the antecedents of the African Church divisions when Augustine entered on his priestly work. In Numidia the Separatists were exceedingly strong. In Hippo they outnumbered the Catholics.[2]

Augustine's letters on the Donatist Controversy occupy a larger space than those on any other subject. They extend over thirty years (from 388 to 417).

The fundamental problem of the Donatist Controversy is: What constitutes the Validity of a Sacrament? Does its validity depend on the personal religion of the minister? Is the validity of a sacrament affected by its being administered beyond the limits of the one visible historic Church?

These questions were forced upon the Church by the facts of its history.

A very admirable discussion of the principles underlying this controversy will be found in *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, edited by the late Professor Swete, pp. 143–196.

There is much to be gathered from these letters on Donatism about Augustine's theory of the relation of the Roman See to the other local churches; of the position of Apostolic Sees in general; of the place which the Authority of Councils occupied in the Universal Church; of the authority of the Episcopate; of the principles of Succession; of the validity of Sacraments; of the nature of the Church and of Schism.

It is necessary to remember that our knowledge of Donatism is chiefly derived from its opponents; that it clearly possessed many sincere and admirable men; that the rude fanatics who became the terror of North Africa in Augustine's days were not necessarily the

[1] Letter 105, § 9. [2] Letter 129, § 6. Letter 209, § 2.

truest examples of its spirit, although they were historically the most conspicuous.[1]

Moreover Augustine's teaching on coercion in religion must not be criticised apart from the deplorable circumstances which provoked him to alter his opinion.

Augustine's earliest existing letter[2] on the Donatist Controversy is addressed to a bishop of the Donatist Communion. It is directed in terms of courtesy "to Maximin, my most beloved lord and honoured brother, Augustine, presbyter of the Catholic Church, sends greeting in the Lord."

But Augustine proceeds to qualify every epithet and to neutralise its effect by explaining the sense in which he employs them. He explains that if he call Maximin honoured he does not mean to honour him as Bishop, for he says quite frankly "you are no Bishop to me." He asks Maximin not to be offended by this, as he considers that sincerity requires such plain speaking. What he honours in Maximin is simply his dignity as a man. After explaining away the whole of the address in this fashion, Augustine reaches the subject of his letter. Rumour says that Maximin has actually rebaptised a Catholic deacon. Now, to rebaptise a Catholic is in Augustine's opinion the most atrocious wickedness ("immanissimum scelus").

He therefore calls on Maximin to explain his conduct in a letter[3] which he will read to the congregation in church. He appeals to Maximin to remember the transitoriness of earthly honours and the judgment-seat of Christ.

"The honour of this world passes away, ambition also passes. In the future judgment of Christ neither elevated stalls nor canopied pulpits (absidæ gradatæ, nec cathedræ velatæ), nor the processions and chantings of throngs of consecrated virgins shall be admitted for

[1] Cf. Monceaux, *Histoire Littéraire de l'Afrique Chrétienne*, 1905.

[2] Letter 23, A.D. 388.

[3] Letter 23, § 3.

the defence, when conscience shall begin to accuse and the Lord of Conscience to give decision. The things that are an honour here will be a burden there: what here exalts will there depress."[1]

Augustine calls on him to say, I know but one Baptism, consecrated and sealed in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This form, wherever I find it, I needs must acknowledge. I do not destroy what I recognise as my Lord's. I do not dishonour the banner of my King.

Augustine pleads earnestly with the Donatist Bishop against rending the seamless robe of Christ: breaking, that is, the unity of the Church. He laments the deplorable divisions of African Christianity of which one consequence was that believers in Christ could share their daily bread at home, but could not share together the Table of Christ. There was no spiritual hospitality between the Donatist and the Catholic Communion of the fourth century. Augustine dwells on the strangeness of the fact that man and wife who vowed mutual fidelity were rending Christ's own Body by belonging to different Communions. It was a scandal, a triumph of Satan, a ruin of souls. Great would be his reward in Heaven who could remedy this miserable calamity by which the whole of Africa was grievously afflicted.

He appeals to Bishop Maximin that both sides should avoid exasperating allusions to the past.[2] Let Donatists say nothing again of the incidents which they call the *tempora Macariana* (that is, the period when the State official Macarius treated the Donatists with severity). Let the Catholics say nothing again about the violence of the Circumcellions (that is, the rude gang of fanatics who terrorised all Africa in the Donatist interest). He invites Maximin to a further conference with him on the subject of the Schism. If

[1] Another of Augustine's untranslatable plays on words: "Quæ hic honorant, ibi onerant."

[2] Letter 23, § 6.

Maximin refuses, he will read the correspondence between them before his congregation, in order that the Catholic people may be the better instructed in the facts of the Controversy. He promises that he will not appeal for protection to the civil power if the Donatists do not invoke the support of their fanatics.

Augustine further explains that he writes in the absence of his Bishop, who, if present, would doubtless either have written in person or have approved Augustine's action. But the rebaptising of a Catholic deacon was a scandal which admitted of no delay in expressing his grief.

Soon after his episcopate began,[1] and while Bishop Valerius was still living, he wrote to Proculeian, the Donatist bishop of his own city Hippo.

In this letter he is most anxious to conciliate, and to remove any bad impression caused by Catholics on the Donatist mind. He is afraid that his companion Evodius has spoken with more zeal than consideration. Proculeian has complained of this. Augustine asks him to believe that Evodius's conduct was not caused by contempt but by devoted attachment to the Church.[2]

Augustine invites Proculeian to hold a discussion with him on the subject of African divisions.[3]

He pleads strongly with Proculeian on the duty of promoting Reunion.[4] What have we to do, he asks, with the quarrels of long ago? He points out that insensibility to wounds is a sign of mortification and not of life. He appeals to the miserable effects of separate Communions on the life of the home. Husband and wife agree in their union with each other but disagree concerning the altar of Christ. They can keep pace on every subject except religion. Parents and children share one house but cannot share one House of God.

[1] Letter 33.
[2] Letter 33, § 3.
[3] Letter 33, § 4.
[4] Letter 33, § 5.

The letter to Proculeian was followed by two others to his congregation in Hippo diocese.[1]

Augustine here lays down emphatically that he has no desire that any one should be coerced into the Catholic Communion. That was his original principle, however much under the influence of circumstances he diverged from it afterwards.

But Augustine feels forced to call attention to the unworthy motives by which exchange of Communion was sometimes prompted.[2] There was a young man among the Catholics at Hippo who beat his own mother, and, on being rebuked by the Bishop, became a convert to the Donatists, who baptised him, and gave him a conspicuous position in their Church.

Augustine desires to know what responsibility Bishop Proculeian acknowledges in this transaction. And further he desires to know whether Proculeian will meet him and discuss their differences. Such discussion cannot be held in some other city, as Proculeian appears to suggest. For Augustine has no business beyond the diocese of Hippo, and the question is between Proculeian and himself. If Proculeian thinks himself no match for Augustine let him call in whatever aid he pleases. But Augustine professes that hesitation on the part of a matured, experienced person like Proculeian to meet such a novice as himself is unaccountable. Or if Proculeian prefers, Augustine will send another Catholic Bishop instead of coming in person.

The scandalous conversion mentioned in his last letter[3] was not the only example which came under Augustine's notice in the diocese. There was a subdeacon of the Church at Spana named Primus, who was deprived of office for immoral relations to certain nuns. He instantly became converted to the Donatist Com-

[1] Letters 34 and 35.
[2] Letter 34, § 2.
[3] Letter 35.

munion, and the two nuns followed him. This trio were now members of a group of wandering missionaries. Augustine inquires whether Proculeian is ignorant of this scandal as well as of the other.

There is a further grievance still. Augustine himself visiting the Church at Spana was shouted at by a Presbyter of Proculeian for being a persecutor. Yet Augustine had expressly refused to allow a father to compel his daughter to leave the Donatists for the Catholic Communion.

One of the very best of Augustine's letters on African Church Divisions is Letter 43.[1]

This letter was written in 398 to a group of prominent Donatists with whom Augustine had recently held a discussion. He wants to approach them in a conciliatory spirit. The present generation had inherited this schism, not created it. What constitutes a heretic is not so much the special error which he maintains as the spirit in which he maintains it. Augustine puts these ideas into the following sentence:

"But though the doctrine which men hold be false and perverse, if they do not maintain it with passionate obstinacy, especially when they have not devised it by the rashness of their own presumption, but have accepted it from parents who had been misguided and had fallen into error, and if they are with anxiety seeking the truth, and are prepared to be set right when they have found it, such men are not to be counted heretics."[2]

The letter is concerned with the proper inferences to be drawn from the history of the Donatist Communion and of the Catholic Church in Africa. It presupposes a knowledge of the main facts. Both Catholic and Donatist alike were familiar with the general history of the divisions.

Augustine here recalls[3] to the Donatist reader's mind

[1] Letter 43, written in A.D. 398.
[2] Letter 43, § 1.
[3] Letter 43, § 3.

the principal points urged in his recent discussion with them. The Donatists produced certain Acts or Ecclesiastical Records in which it was stated that Cæcilian of Carthage was condemned by a Council of seventy bishops. The Catholics replied by producing certain other Ecclesiastical Documents according to which the Donatist party included bishops who had committed the very same offence with which they charged Cæcilian and yet were tolerated in office among them.

Augustine maintains that the ordination of Majorinus as a rival to Bishop Cæcilian [1] was an "erection of altar against altar," and a sinful rending of the unity of Christ.

He points out that the Donatists appealed to the secular authorities in the person of the Emperor Constantine, asking him to appoint bishops at a distance from the scene of strife who might adjudicate in the dispute. Constantine granted the request, and three trials followed.

The first was before Melchiades, Bishop of Rome, and certain assessors (313). In this trial Cæcilian was acquitted. From this the Donatists appealed. A second trial was held in the Council of Arles 314. Here again Cæcilian was acquitted. Once more the Donatists appealed to the Emperor. A third trial was now held by Constantine in person. This confirmed the acquittal of the previous judgments.

Augustine's comment on all this is that Cæcilian of Carthage "could afford to disregard even a number of enemies conspiring against him, because he saw himself united by letters of communion both to the Roman Church in which the supremacy of an apostolic chair has always flourished [2] ("in qua semper apostolicæ cathedræ viguit principatus"), and to all other lands from which Africa itself received the Gospel; and was prepared to defend himself before these Churches if his adversaries attempted to cause an alienation of them from him." [3]

[1] Letter 43, § 4. [2] Letter 43, § 7. [3] *Ibid.*

The points to notice in this important paragraph are: (1) the meaning of *principatus*, or supremacy, as applied to the Roman Church. (2) Whether the rendering should be *an* apostolic chair, or *the* apostolic chair: that is, whether Augustine denotes a prerogative of all apostolic Churches in general or of the Roman See in particular. (3) The appeal which Augustine considers Cæcilian is prepared to make is not only to the Roman Church, but to the other Churches also with which he was united.[1]

Augustine argues[2] that Secundus, the Primate, who presided over the Council at Carthage, ought not to have permitted a judgment to be given against the absent Bishop Cæcilian. True, that Cæcilian refused to appear before the Council. But this was not the case of the trial of a priest or one of the inferior orders of clergy. It was a case of one of their own colleagues, a bishop; who had the right to reserve the decision to the judgment of other bishops, especially those of the Apostolic Churches. The Primate's duty in the case was to Augustine's mind perfectly plain.

If the Numidian bishops had resisted the Primate's advice to postpone decision,[3] they would have been frustrated, because no act of theirs could be valid without the Primate's approval. If they still persisted, and acted in defiance of the Primate, he would be wiser to separate himself from their disorderly procedures than from the Communion of the world-wide Church.

Augustine further contended[4] that Cæcilian's opponents included men who had committed the very act of betraying sacred writings which they laid to Cæcilian's charge.

In any case Cæcilian and his adherents ought not to

[1] For critical notices of this passage see Bright, *The Roman See in the Early Church*, p. 62; Father Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, 1914, p. 152; Denny's *Papalism*.

[2] Letter 43, § 7.

[3] Letter 43, § 9.

[4] Letter 43, § 10.

have been condemned in their absence.[1] For they were not chargeable with deserting a tribunal before which they had never stood; nor was the Church so exclusively represented in these African bishops that refusal to appear before them was equivalent to declining all ecclesiastical jurisdiction. For there remained thousands of bishops in countries beyond the sea, before whom it was obvious that those who seemed to distrust their peers in Africa and Numidia could be tried.

There was a further problem to be discussed:[2] namely, the relation of the Church to the State. The Donatists complained that Cæcilian had been acquitted by the secular authorities. It was not right that a bishop should be acquitted by trial before a proconsul.

Augustine points out in reply that it was not Cæcilian who appealed to the Emperor Constantine. Augustine appears to recognise an authority in the Emperor to secure the peace of the Church in case of internal disputes. This matter belonged especially to his care. He would have to give account concerning it to God. ("Imperator . . . ad cujus curam, de qua rationem Deo rediturus esset, res illa maxime pertinebat."[3]) In any case the objection came most unbecomingly from the Donatists, since it was they who made the appeal to the Emperor, and then refused to abide by his decision.

But after all, as Augustine had already reminded his Donatist opponents,[4] the Imperial sentence was only one of the three trials of the case of Cæcilian. It was also tried before the Roman Bishop with certain episcopal colleagues. Augustine asks whether the Donatists object to this episcopal court?

"Perhaps you will say that Melchiades, Bishop of the Roman Church, along with the other bishops beyond

[1] Letter 43, § 11. [2] Letter 43, § 13.
[3] Contrast S. Ambrose. "Sermo contra Auxentium." Works, II, 1018, § 36.
[4] Letter 43, § 14.

the sea who acted as his colleagues, had no right to usurp the place of judge in a matter which had been already settled by seventy African bishops, over whom the Bishop of Tigisis (Secundus) as Primate presided."

Augustine's reply to this possible objection against the Roman Bishop with his colleagues deciding a case already tried before a tribunal in Africa is remarkable. He says:

"But what will you say if he in fact did not usurp this place? For the Emperor, being appealed to, sent bishops to sit with him as judges, with authority to decide the whole matter in the way which to them seemed just."

Augustine apparently here represents the Roman Bishop as nominated judge of this African dispute by the Emperor with authority to give final decision. But before any inference is drawn from this passage it is essential to read what the writer says later in § 20 of this same letter.

Meanwhile Augustine is strong in praise[1] of the moral value of the Roman Bishop's conduct of the Court before which Cæcilian was tried.

Augustine refuses to acquiesce merely in superiority of numbers. Doubtless there were seventy bishops who condemned Cæcilian in Africa, while not a tenth part of that number acquitted him with Melchiades in Rome. But it is a question of quality not of mere quantity. Augustine is clear that in this instance the votes must be weighed not counted. And the weightiness of which he thinks is moral not ecclesiastical or official. He does not mean that the Roman Council had higher ecclesiastical authority than belonged to an African provincial assembly. It possesses a moral superiority.

In Augustine's view the Council over which the Roman Bishop Melchiades presided[2] did not care to

[1] Letter 43, § 16. [2] *Ibid.*

inquire either what was the number of those bishops, or whence they had been collected, when they saw them to be blinded with such reckless presumption as to pronounce rash sentence upon their colleagues in their absence, and without having examined them.

With these moral defects of the Council of the Seventy Bishops, Augustine proceeds to contrast the moral excellence of the Council of the few, and more especially of the presiding bishop.

"And yet what a decision was finally pronounced by the blessed Melchiades himself: how equitable, how complete, how prudent, and how fitting to make peace! For he did not presume to depose from his college (de collegio suo) colleagues against whom nothing had been proved," etc. "O excellent man!" (adds Augustine after a little further explanation,) "O son of Christian peace, father of the Christian people. Compare now this handful with that multitude of bishops, not counting, but weighing them: on the one side you have moderation and circumspection; on the other, precipitancy and blindness."[1]

And here Augustine goes behind the Ecclesiastical Assembly in Africa[2] to the wire-pullers and real influences at work. He declares that some of Cæcilian's opponents were maintained against him by the wrath of a lady named Lucilla, who took a violent dislike to Cæcilian because he had ventured to rebuke her for certain religious practices which he considered superstitious. Augustine also declares that it could be proved from public records in the possession of one Zenophilus that Lucilla's money had greatly promoted the opposition to Cæcilian.[3] He says they were urged on by a women's spite.

But, says Augustine, suppose that the tribunal before which the case of Cæcilian was tried was, as his opponents declare, unjust.

[1] Letter 43, § 16. [2] Letter 43, § 17. [3] Letter 43, § 18.

"Well, let us suppose that those bishops who decided the case at Rome were not good judges;[1] there still remained a plenary Council of the Universal Church, in which these judges themselves might be put on their defence; so that, if they were convicted of mistake, their decisions might be reversed."

Augustine complains that the Donatists make no such appeal to a plenary Council of the Universal Church. Instead of appealing to the plenary Council they appealed against the Council at Rome to the Emperor. That was the reason why Constantine granted the Donatists a second trial of Cæcilian at the Council of Arles: not because this was due to them, but only as a concession to their stubbornness. "For this Christian Emperor did not presume so to grant their unruly and groundless complaints as to make himself the judge of the decision pronounced by the bishops who had sat at Rome; but he appointed, as I have said, other bishops, from whom, however, they preferred again to appeal to the Emperor himself; and you have heard the terms in which he disapproved of this."[2]

From this point Augustine describes in strong and indignant terms[3] the inconsistences and the calamities in which the adherents of the Schism are involved. This he does at considerable length and with much eloquence. He brings his long letter towards its close with one of those striking and remarkable sentences which live to this day: "No one can cancel from heaven the decree of God, no one can cancel from earth the Church of God."[4]

This long and careful letter on the history of the Donatist Body was the sequel to a conference held by Augustine with their leaders at a town in his

[1] Letter 43, § 19.
[2] Letter 43, § 20.
[3] Letter 43, § 21.
[4] Nemo delet de cœlo constitutionem Dei, nemo delet de terra Ecclesiam Dei. Letter 43, § 27.

diocese. He was indefatigable in his exertions to secure reunion. We find him, as he travelled about his diocese, seeking interviews wherever possible with the Donatist Bishops. Thus at a town called Tubursi he visited the Donatist Bishop Fortunius, and wrote an account of the interview in a letter[1] to the same persons whom he had addressed in Letter 43.

Augustine's account shows the singular futility of Conferences on Reunion where the desire for mutual understanding is not strongly developed. The Catholic desired reunion with the Donatist, but not the Donatist with the Catholic. Crowds assembled, but rather in the hope of witnessing a scene between the two bishops; in the spirit in which they might attend a theatre rather than a serious discussion on matters of faith. Augustine draws a lively picture of the confusion and disorder and interruptions, and the refusal to allow reporters to take notes, in a meeting of several hours' duration.

When the meeting had been reduced to comparative quiet,[2] Fortunius spoke approvingly of Augustine's manner of life, but added that such work would be excellent if it had been done within the Church. But he denied absolutely that Augustine was within the Church.

Thereupon Augustine asked what the true Church was? Was it a world-wide community, or was it merely local and African? Fortunius replied that his Church existed in all parts of the world. Augustine then inquired whether the Donatist Bishop could prove his membership in the Universal Church by issuing letters of Communion to places which Augustine would select.

This question Fortunius evaded in a cloud of words,[3] and went off into the totally different proposition that a test of the true Church was to be found in its endurance of persecution. He quoted the Beatitude on those who suffered persecution for righteousness' sake.

[1] Letter 44, A. D. 389. [2] Letter 44, § 3. [3] Letter 44, § 4.

Augustine thanked him for the appropriateness of the quotation, but pointed out that the Beatitude did not apply to all the persecuted as such indiscriminately, but only to those whose cause was righteous. The previous question, therefore, was whether the Donatists were acting rightfully. No one denied that they had suffered persecution.

Augustine, however, insisted on asking whether the Donatists had not, as indeed they had, separated from the Church Catholic long before the Macarian persecution. Consequently the real question was, whether they had not done serious wrong in severing themselves from the Universal Church. So Augustine brought the discussion back to the question whether the persecution which the Donatists suffered was for righteousness' sake.[1]

"I asked them," wrote Augustine,[2] "how they could justify their separation of themselves from all other Christians who had done them no wrong, who throughout the world preserved the order of succession, and were established in the most ancient churches, but had no knowledge whatever as to who were traditors in Africa; and who assuredly could not hold communion with others than those whom they heard of as occupying the episcopal sees."

He found that the Donatists were supporting their cause by appealing to a Council of Arians.[3] But the Donatists refused to lend him the document or even to allow him to mark the MS. to insure its identity on a subsequent occasion.

Returning to the subject of persecution for righteousness' sake, Augustine[4] asked Bishop Fortunius whether he considered Ambrose, Bishop of the Church of Milan,

[1] The facts about Macarius, sent in A. D. 347, will be found in *Optatus*, Book III. See also Augustine's Works, ed. Gaume, Tom. IX. pp. 1115–1117.

[2] Letter 44, § 5.

[3] Letter 44, § 6.

[4] Letter 44, § 7.

to be a righteous man and a Christian? This apparently simple question put the Donatist Bishop in a dilemma. If he were to admit that Ambrose was a righteous man and a Christian, Augustine intended at once to retort, "Then why do you think it necessary for Ambrose to be baptised?" Fortunius, in order to avoid that perplexity, was forced to say that Ambrose was not a Christian nor a righteous man. To which Augustine replied by relating the story of the persecutions which Ambrose had endured from the Arian authorities. Clearly therefore, on Fortunius's own principles, the suffering of persecution was not a test of righteousness.

After further debate on this point,[1] Augustine urged that mutual recriminations ought to be laid aside. Christ's treatment of Judas Iscariot emphasised the duty of tolerating evil. Christ admitted Judas to the first Sacrament of His Body and Blood. Augustine says that almost everybody present felt the force of this argument.

Fortunius endeavoured to destroy the force of it by urging that communion with an evil person did no injury to the Apostles, because they had not yet received the Baptism of Christ, but only that of S. John Baptist.

Augustine's reply to this is curious. (1) He asserted that when Christ sent His disciples to baptise, the Baptism which they administered was that of Christ and not that of S. John. (2) That accordingly the disciples must have been already themselves baptised with the Baptism of Christ. For how could they give what they had not received? This was the favourite Donatist maxim. (3) That the Apostles must have received the Baptism of Christ before the Institution of the Eucharist. "For how could they receive the Eucharist if not previously baptised?"

Fortunius here observed[2] that his party were apprehensive of further persecutions from Catholics, and asked

[1] Letter 44, § 10.

[2] Letter 44, § 11.

what attitude Augustine was prepared to adopt in the event of any such occurrence.

Augustine dissociated himself altogether from approval of persecution. We know how on this important matter he was afterwards overruled. But he said on the present occasion that if persecution arose it would be the work of evil men. He spoke of forbearing one another in love. He referred to the conduct of Bishop Genethlius of Carthage,[1] predecessor of Aurelius, who suppressed an edict against the Donatists. This reference was highly commended. Nevertheless, retorted Augustine, the Donatists would have rebaptised Bishop Genethlius if he had fallen into their power.

The Conference was now breaking up, and ready to disperse. Fortunius remarked with great frankness that their existing rule required the rebaptism of every convert from the Catholic Church. But he evidently regretted that this rule had ever been made. He deplored many of the actions perpetrated by his own Communion. He was evidently well-disposed toward the Catholic Church. He went the following day of his own accord to have further talk with Augustine, and parted on friendly terms.

Augustine thought that good might be done by further consultation in the absence of the disorderly throng of Donatist adherents, and suggests that a private meeting might be held elsewhere.

The Donatist Communion experienced the tendency to sub-division, which is the common tendency of separated churches.[2] A remarkable and instructive example of this was the case of the Maximianists, which Augustine puts forward in Letter 51. Since the facts were thoroughly well known to the Donatists whom he was controverting, Augustine deals with the case here in a rather allusive manner, taking much for granted as common knowledge. He tells the story

[1] Letter 44, § 12.

[2] Letter 51, A.D. 400.

more completely elsewhere in his treatises against the Donatists.[1] Briefly the facts were these. Maximian was a Donatist deacon who rebelled against his Bishop, separated from the parent Community, obtained episcopal consecration, and established a new Donatist Church, over which he presided as chief. The original Donatist Communion not only pronounced him and his adherents outside the Church, but also went to law against them and endeavoured to get them turned out of the churches which they occupied. But meanwhile the Maximianists thrived. Their adherents multiplied. They set up rival Churches in hundreds of towns and villages. Thus two Donatist Bishops in addition to the Catholic Bishop existed in most places. The separation grew so serious that the original Donatist Church took alarm. It was now determined to secure reunion at every cost. The Maximianists, who up to then were discredited and regarded as unbaptised, were now received without rebaptism into the original Donatist Communion and their adherents with them.

Thus on motives of expediency the very principles which the original Donatist Church insisted on as vital in regard to the Catholic Communion were simply overlooked and set aside for the sake of recovering the Maximianists.

This is the point which Augustine forces on the attention of the Donatists in the present letter. He draws out the inconsistency of it, and the injustice of the Donatists towards the Catholic Church. They acknowledged the Baptism of the Maximianists and rejected that of the Universal Church.

Here is his concluding appeal:

"Look to the charge made by your Council against the Maximianists as guilty of impious schism; look to the persecutions by the civil courts to which you appealed

[1] See the *Treatise against Cresconius*, Book IV.; Works, IX. 742, and the *Treatise de Gestis cum Emerito*, Works, IX. 964.

against them ; look to the fact that you restored some of them without reordination, and accepted their baptism as valid ; and answer, if you can, whether it is in your power to hide, even from the ignorant, the question why you have separated yourselves from the whole world in a schism more heinous than that which you boast of having condemned in the Maximianists?"

Another letter was written to Generosus, a layman of Cirta, or Constantine, the capital of Numidia.[1] The Episcopal Succession in the Donatist Communion in Cirta had been urged upon Generosus. And Augustine accordingly here deals with the principle of the Apostolic succession in the Catholic Church. Herein lies the importance of the letter. It has been pointed out (Turner, "Apostolic Succession," essay in *Early History of the Church and Ministry*, pp. 192, 193) that this is not one of Augustine's usual arguments in the Donatist Controversy. But he was willing enough to take it up when challenged. Succession, as he understood it, meant the series of Bishops in a particular See. It is a succession "from holder to holder, not from consecrator to consecrated" (*ib.* p. 193).

Another letter was written by Augustine together with Alypius and Fortunatus to the same Generosus. Generosus had received a letter[2] from a Donatist priest who professed that he had been ordered by an angel to convert Generosus to the Donatist Communion.

Augustine reminds Generosus, who was not at all favourably impressed by this Donatist overture, of the Pauline teaching that if an angel from heaven were to preach any other gospel than that which he had received, the proper reply would be an anathema.

Augustine proceeds further to give a list of the Episcopal succession in Rome from S. Peter to Anastasius.[3] The list including Peter consists of thirty-nine names. Augustine points out that no Donatist can

[1] Letter 53. [2] Letter 53, A.D. 400. [3] Letter 53, § 2.

be found in this Succession. There was indeed a small Donatist Community in Rome with a Bishop sent to them from Africa. The sect was known apparently derisively from its insignificance and obscurity as *the Montenses*,[1] or by a term which is probably corrupt, and the meaning quite uncertain—*Cutzupitæ*.

But, says Augustine,[2] even if a faithless individual had been intruded into the order of the Bishops between S. Peter and Anastasius who now occupies the See, that individual failure would not affect the status of the Church (nihil præjudicaret Ecclesiæ et innocentibus Christianis). Christ Himself has provided against such contingencies (S. Matt. xxiii. 3).

And the Donatist is at the disadvantage that he reads in Scripture of Apostolic Churches with which he is not in communion.

Augustine then turns to the evidence of public documents[3] to show that the Donatist succession had been invalidated by the very infidelity and persecution which they charged against the Catholic Succession of Bishops.

Another letter on the African Schism warns the Donatists by the fate of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.[4] Augustine appeals to the moral sense of his correspondent Emeritus, that no high-minded man could defend the conduct of the notorious Donatist, Bishop Optatus, whose scandalous career was a disgrace to any Community.[5] He asks with what justice could the Churches, which were apostolic foundations, be condemned by the Donatists for their ignorance of an African dispute. He claims that if Catholics[6] appealed to the State it was only to protect themselves from violence, as S. Paul himself had done. "The question between us, however, is, whether your Church or ours is the Church of God?"[7]

By the beginning of the fifth century the fanaticism of

[1] Letter 53, § 2. [2] Letter 53, § 3. [3] Letter 53, § 4.
[4] Letter 87, A.D. 405. [5] Letter 87, §§ 4 and 5.
[6] Letter 87, § 8. [7] Letter 87, § 10.

the Donatists' Communion had become intolerable. In the year 406 the Catholic clergy of the diocese of Hippo Regius sent the Donatists a letter[1] which gives details of the cruel sufferings inflicted on the Church by the Separated Body. Important extracts are given from public documents of the time of Constantine to show what the actual facts at the beginning of the Division really were. But the account of the sufferings of Catholics is dreadful. Bishops were waylaid during their pastoral visitation and savagely beaten.[2] When complaints were made to the Donatist authorities they were evaded or rejected. Catholics were compelled in self-defence to appeal to the State for protection.

The diocese of Calama over which Possidius, Augustine's friend and biographer, presided was the scene of a Pagan riot in 408 (see Letters 90, 91). Shortly after that outbreak subsided a riot of Donatist fanatics followed. A desperate attempt was made by a Donatist priest named Crispin to murder Bishop Possidius, who very narrowly escaped with his life.

Augustine has elsewhere told the story of the sufferings of Bishop Possidius.[3] The Donatists surrounded the house in which he was taking refuge, stormed it, and attempted to set it on fire. The inhabitants of the town dared not resist the Donatists, but warned Crispin, the leader of the attack, what the consequences might be at the hands of the State. This warning had some effect, and the flames were partially extinguished. But Crispin and his crew burst into the house, killed the cattle on the ground floor, and dragged down the Bishop from the upper storey and beat him, until Crispin himself grew frightened and called his associates off.

The case was brought before the secular authorities, and Crispin was condemned to pay a fine of ten pounds in gold, according to the Law of Theodosius. The

[1] Letter 88, to Januarius. [2] Letter 88, § 6.
[3] Augustine, *Contra Crescon. Donat.* iii. 50.

Catholics then acted with great forbearance. Bishop Possidius himself interceded on Crispin's behalf with the Emperor and the fine was remitted.

A Council of Bishops was held which sent a deputation to Rome requesting that this fine of ten pounds in gold should not be inflicted on all Donatist leaders indiscriminately, as the Imperial decree had ordered, but only on those who inflicted violence on the Catholic Church. However this considerate and forgiving spirit did little good. Another bishop, the Catholic Bishop of Bagae, had been brutally injured by the Donatists, and his case was known at Rome. The Emperor therefore insisted on severer measures with a view to repress these ferocious outbursts of fanaticism.

Then the Circumcellions resorted to vitriol throwing.[1] They flung a mixture of lime and acid into the eyes of their religious opponents with blinding effect. When action was taken against them by the State the Donatists considered themselves victims of persecution. In a sentence Augustine sums up the position: "They live as robbers, they die as Circumcelliones, they are honoured as martyrs."

Further arguments and criticisms on the Donatist position are given in a letter[2] to an owner of property near Hippo whose servants were members of the sect.

Once more Augustine insists that rejection of the authority of the State comes with bad grace from those who appealed to the Emperor Constantine, esteeming the Imperial authority so much "above that of all the Bishops beyond the sea, that to him rather than to them they referred this ecclesiastical dispute."[3]

But, argues Augustine,[4] even if you grant that the decision of these judges was unjust, what then? They are responsible to God for their verdict. But what has the Church done, the Universal Church, that

[1] Letter 88, § 8.
[2] Letter 89.
[3] Letter 89, § 3.
[4] Letter 89, § 4.

it should deserve to be rebaptised, merely because it accepts the decision of the civil courts, of judges whom it believed to be in a position to know the facts? "No man deserves to be blamed for the crime of another; what then has the whole world to do with the sin which some one in Africa may have committed? No man deserves to be blamed for a crime about which he knows nothing; and how could the whole world possibly know the crime in this case, whether the judges or the party condemned were guilty? You who have understanding, judge what I say. Here is the justice of heretics: the party of Donatus condemns the whole world unheard, because the whole world does not condemn a crime unknown."

Then as to the Donatist theory,[1] that the validity of Baptism depends on the righteousness of the minister, Augustine reduces it to an absurdity. For they admitted that Baptism conferred in their own Communion by an unworthy minister whose unworthiness is secret is valid. Accordingly the Catholics asked: Who in that case is the real Baptiser? The Donatists could only answer it is God. Thereupon Augustine presented the Donatist with the following conclusion: If when Baptism is administered by a righteous minister, it is the minister who sanctifies the candidate; but when Baptism is administered by a secretly unworthy minister, it is God who sanctifies; the candidate ought to wish to be baptised rather by a minister who is secretly bad than by one who is manifestly good. For obviously God sanctifies much more effectually than any minister, however righteous, can do.

The absurdity of this logical inference shows how wrong the Donatist theory of the influence of the minister on the Sacrament is. We are not to put our trust in man, but in Christ. The validity of Baptism does not depend on the moral worth of the minister.

[1] Letter 89, § 5.

It is valid because Christ Himself is the real Baptiser.

Augustine warns Festus, his correspondent, that the men on his property near Hippo are still Donatists,[1] and that Festus's letter to them has taken no effect. He suggests that Festus should send some trusty servant to the Bishop who will explain the steps that should be taken.

The letter to Vincent contains Augustine's famous defence of coercion.[2]

The defence is based on the ground of expediency. Coercion has been found productive of satisfactory results. It has made men amenable to reason, and reduced them to a teachable frame of mind.

Augustine illustrates from cases in which coercion is incontestably right.[3] It is right to restrain a delirious patient from injuring himself. Severity is confessedly sometimes right.[4] Did not God chasten Israel? Does He not correct those whom He loves? Is it not written "compel them to come in"?[5]—giving that fatal interpretation which was destined to have such far-reaching and disastrous consequences. Was not S. Paul coerced by Christ to embrace the truth? Did not Sarah rightly afflict her insolent servant? If Jezebel slew prophets so did Elijah.[6] Nor was this confined to the Old Testament.[7] God spared not His only Son. The difference between rightful and wrongful compulsion depends upon the motive. When the Father delivered up His Son, and Judas delivered up Jesus Christ, the action was the same but the motive different. Everything depends on the motive of coercion. The magistrates imprisoned S. Paul, but S. Paul delivered over a person to Satan which is infinitely worse. The Jews scourged Christ; Christ also scourged the Jews.[8]

[1] Letter 89, § 8.
[2] Letter 93, A.D. 408.
[3] Letter 93, § 2.
[4] Letter 93, § 4.
[5] Letter 93, § 5.
[6] Letter 93, § 6.
[7] Letter 93, § 7.
[8] Letter 93, § 8.

Vincent objected that no example of appeal to the State by the Church[1] to exercise coercion is found in the New Testament. Augustine admits that this is true. But times have changed. He finds an illustration of two periods of the Church's existence in the story of Nebuchadnezzar. The age of the Apostles resembled Nebuchadnezzar's persecution of the faithful. The age after Constantine resembled Nebuchadnezzar's decree enforcing penalties against those who spoke a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

Coercion as a matter of practical experience had proved extremely beneficial.[2] It had brought many misguided individuals to accept the truth.

Augustine confesses that he had originally held the opposite view.[3] He had maintained that no one should be forced into Christian unity. He had believed that Christianity must be advanced by argument and persuasion, but not by compulsion. He had been keenly alive to the dangers of hypocritical conversions.

But he had now altered his opinion. And this change of mind was not due to the arguments of other bishops, but simply to the evidence of the results which compulsion had produced. He had seen the change wrought in his own city, under his own eyes, by the Imperial edicts. Hippo had been almost entirely Donatist. It was now a Catholic city. He had ascertained from the admissions of those converts that family tradition, ignorance, prejudice, misrepresentation, had kept multitudes alienated from the Church. Crowds of people had imagined that it was a matter of pure indifference to which Christian Communion a person might belong. Many remained in schism simply because they had been born into it, and not from any personal conviction.

[1] Letter 93, § 9.
[2] Letter 93, § 16.
[3] Letter 93, § 17.

Augustine dwells here as often on the note of Catholicity as a test of the true Church.

"You think that you make a very acute remark when you affirm the name Catholic to mean Universal, not in respect to the Communion as embracing the whole world, but in respect to the observance of all Divine precepts and of all the Sacraments; as if we (even accepting the position that the Church is called Catholic because it honestly holds the whole truth, of which fragments here and there are found in some heresies) rested upon the testimony of this word's signification, and not upon the promises of God, and so many indisputable testimonies of the truth itself, our demonstration of the existence of the Church of God in all nations. In fact, however, this is the whole which you attempt to make us believe, that the Donatists alone remain worthy of the name Catholics, on the ground of their observing all the Divine precepts and all the Sacraments; and that you are the only persons in whom the Son of Man when He cometh shall find faith. You must excuse me for saying we do not believe a word of this."[1]

Augustine further insisted here, as often in other places, above all in his expositions on the Psalms, that Scripture contains witness to Christ and witness to the Church, and that to throw discredit on its witness in the one case virtually undermines its credit in the other. How can we be sure that we have indisputable testimony to Christ in the Divine word, if we do not accept as indisputable the testimony of the same word to the Church?[2]

The Donatist was involved in this inconsistency, for he accepted the witness of Scripture to Christ's Passion and Resurrection, but rejected its witness to the Catholic or world-wide character of the Church.

He also urges that the erection of an exclusive,

[1] Letter 93, § 23. [2] *Ibid.*

separated body,[1] on the plea of higher sanctity, must always make the separated body liable to be similarly treated by a still smaller and more exclusive minority, who may separate in turn from them as they did from the larger Church and may claim exactly as they did to be the only true Church existing on the earth.

"You are by no means sure that there may not be some righteous persons, few in number, and therefore unknown, dwelling in some place far remote from the south of Africa, who, long before the party of Donatus had withdrawn their righteousness from fellowship with the unrighteousness of all other men, had, in their remote southern region, separated themselves in the same way for some most satisfactory reason, and are now, by a claim superior to yours, the Church of God, as the spiritual Zion which preceded all your sects in a justifiable secession," etc.

Vincent further supported his separation by quotation from S. Hilary and from S. Cyprian.[2] Cyprian was a peculiar cause of embarrassment to the Catholics in this controversy, because he had advocated rebaptism of separatists, which was precisely what the Donatist maintained against the Church. This put the African Church in difficulties. For there was no greater authority among African churchmen than Cyprian. And in this question of rebaptism they were obliged to disown him.

Augustine argues first that episcopal writings are not to be placed on a level of authority with the Scriptures.[3] Secondly, that whatever Cyprian may have written he never separated from the unity of the Church. Thirdly, that Cyprian recognised that his own theory had not been acted upon in the previous generation. Fourthly, Augustine propounded the exceedingly hazardous proposition that Cyprian may

[1] Letter 93, § 25.
[2] Letter 93, § 35.
[3] Letter 93, § 36.

have altered his opinions;[1] adding that critics existed who maintained that Cyprian never held the view ascribed to him, but that it was a pure invention of his enemies. Augustine, however, is much too genuine to agree with such critics as these. He has no doubt that Cyprian held this view.[2] The style of his writings is unmistakable. But after all this does not help the Donatists.[3] For Cyprian's principle was that unity must remain unbroken. Each Bishop was responsible for his action with that unity to Christ. But the Church must continue undivided.

Augustine proceeds to distinguish what he could accept[4] as valid in the Donatists, and what he must regard as their defect. He accepted their Sacraments as valid, because those Sacraments were the Sacraments of Christ and not of Donatus or any other chief of a separation.

"For from the Catholic Church are all the Sacraments of the Lord, which you hold and administer in the same way as they were held and administered even before you went forth from her. The fact, however, that you are no longer in that Church from which proceeded the Sacraments which you have, does not make it the less true that you still have them." . . . "You are at one with us in Baptism, in Creed, and in the other Sacraments of the Lord. But in the spirit of unity and the bond of peace, in a word, in the Catholic Church itself, you are not with us."[5]

It should be noted that the letter to Vincent is distinguished by use of such phrases as "Catholic Churches," "Catholic Unity," "Communion of the Catholic Church"; "within the Communion of the Sacraments of Christ."

The riots at Calama resulted in fresh laws against Pagans and Donatists. The African Proconsul, Donatus, was commissioned to carry these new enactments into

[1] Letter 93, § 38.
[2] Letter 93, § 39.
[3] Letter 93, § 41.
[4] Letter 93, § 46.
[5] *Ibid.*

effect. Augustine, fearing that this would mean severe retaliation on the offenders, exerted himself to restrain the severities of the State. He wrote in 408 (Letter 100) to the Proconsul, entreating him with a most solemn appeal to the Name of our Lord, to exercise Christian leniency even toward the most desperate of these fanatics; to remember the Bishop's petition; to forget the magistrate's power of the sword; to use milder methods of coercion, and to spare their lives.

But the attempts to suppress Donatism by legislation produced its natural result: it intensified their hatred of the Church. Augustine wrote [1] a circular letter to Donatists in general, in which he claims to be promoting Catholic peace, and to be acting in the spirit of the Beatitude: Blessed are the peacemakers. But he acknowledges that his overtures were frustrated by the desperate threat of his opponents: "Go away from our people if you do not desire us to kill you." If imperial laws compel the Donatists to unite with the Church,[2] they have brought it upon themselves by the violence of their own fanatics. Augustine gives examples of the brutal manner in which Donatists revenged themselves on seceders to the Church.

Imperial decrees against the Donatists had been enacted by all the Emperors since Constantine, with the sole exception of Julian, the *desertor Christi* who hoped to destroy Christianity by encouraging divisions. If the sons of Theodosius now made similar enactments they are only following the Imperial tradition.[3]

After all, the appeal to the State was originally made by the Donatists themselves.[4] But Constantine did not venture to pass judgment in the case of a bishop. He left that to be investigated and determined by bishops.

Moreover the imperial decree ordering unity is, after all, the order of Christ.[5] It is exactly what the Apostle

[1] Letter 105, A.D. 409.
[2] Letter 105, § 3.
[3] Letter 105, § 9.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] Letter 105, § 11.

commands, that there be no divisions among us. The Emperors insisted on this because they are Catholic Christians.

God does not desire that they should perish in a sacrilegious discord separated from their Catholic mother.[1]

As to the question concerning unworthy clergy.[2] The charge against Cæcilian has never been proved. But the Christian principle is to correct evil when we can, and to endure it when we cannot correct it. We can unite in Sacraments with unworthy persons without consenting to their sins. Remember the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Augustine appears to argue as if unspirituality did not affect the orthodoxy of the teaching. Even if the teacher is unspiritual his teaching may be true. For what he teaches is not his own but God's, Who has placed the teaching of truth in the seat of unity.[3]

Augustine was simply indefatigable when the State determined to compel the Donatist leaders to a Conference with the Catholics at Carthage in 411. The Tribune Marcellinus had been entrusted by the Emperor with the whole affair, and was authorised to act as a sort of Moderator between the two parties. Marcellinus published a decree regulating the method of procedure.[4] He wished that none but certain selected episcopal representatives should be present at the Conference. Every one else was to be kept at a distance to secure quiet and avoid disturbance from the unruly. To this the Catholics consented. But the Donatists refused. They demanded that the entire number of their Bishops should be present. And the Catholics yielded to this.

The African Bishops proposed that,[5] in the event of Reunion, the Catholic Bishop and the Donatist Bishop should share the See between them. Or else if this was uncongenial to the diocese, both of them should resign.

[1] Letter 105, § 13.
[2] Letter 105, § 16.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Letter 128, A.D. 411.
[5] Letter 105, § 3.

The Catholic Bishops declared that no one ought to shrink from this resignation of their thrones if the interests of the unity of the Church demanded it.

This acknowledgment of the Donatist Orders shows how remarkable a change had passed over African ecclesiastical theories since the age of Cyprian.[1]

The Catholic Bishops, in another letter to Marcellinus,[2] protested their anxiety that mutual recriminations should be laid aside. But they justified Imperial action against the Donatists by an unfortunate appeal to the Jews, threatening foreigners who spoke against the God of Israel. They were on safer ground when they urged that according to the Parable the Church of Christ was to be a mingled community of wheat and tares, and that the separation would take place at the end and not now. They pointed out that the Donatists had been compelled, most inconsistently with their protest against the Church, to overlook unspirituality among themselves in order to avoid subdivision.

The Bishops were apprehensive that the Donatist desire to appear in full force boded ill for unity. It partook rather of the nature of a demonstration of their strength. They wanted to show that Catholics had underrated them and underestimated their numbers. Catholics might have said that the Donatists were not numerous. This was true except in the Province of Numidia. The Catholic Bishops express a hope that there will be no disturbance at the Conference. But they think it wise to be prepared for the worst.

The details of the Conference at Carthage in 411 are to be found in Augustine's Summary of the Conference.[3] But the principal incidents are related in a letter written by Augustine and sent in the name of a Numidian

[1] See further on this subject in Swete's *Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, essay on "Ordination" by Frere. See also Hefele's comments on the bearing of such procedures on the Eighth Canon of Nicæa, *History of the Councils*.

[2] Letter 129, A.D. 411.

[3] Letter 141, A.D. 412.

Council to the Donatists in June 412. Augustine tells us that he wrote this letter, but did not include it in the collection of his correspondence because it was issued as an official document of a Council.[1] It is, however, now placed among his letters by the Benedictine editors. Augustine was himself a member of the Council which issued his letter. The Donatists after the Conference spread a report that the president, Marcellinus, had been bribed by Catholics to decide in their favour. The purpose of the present letter is to refute this baseless scandal by describing the actual events. Augustine says that this letter cost him several nights of labour (Letter 139, p. 3).

The letter bluntly accuses the Donatist Bishops of fraudulent misrepresentation of their real numbers, and of deliberate attempt to delay the proceedings and to evade a decision. Under the circumstances this latter is not improbable. For the Donatists were forced by Imperial regulations to attend in spite of their reluctance. It is strange that the African Bishops did not realise the moral futility of such conferences. Modern historians consider that the confusion can be accounted for without accusations of duplicity.

The letter says[2] that in the course of the investigation into the history of both parties it was shown that the Donatists had retained unspiritual persons within their Communion; which was the very pretext of their separation from the Catholics. When this was urged against them in the Conference the Donatists were forced to excuse it on the principle that causes and persons must be judged on their own merits: the very principle which the Catholics maintained as an argument against Separation. If that principle were applied to the claim of Cæcilian and the claim of the Church, the entire controversy would be at an end.

The letter adds that the Donatists were reduced to

[1] *Retract.* ii. 40.

[2] Letter 141, § 6.

much confusion and embarrassment, and produced documents in their own defence which in reality strengthened the Catholic cause. It was all providential—in the opinion of the Council.

In 412 we find Augustine writing to Apringius the Proconsul, Marcellinus's brother,[1] calling on him to remember the Divine Judgment Seat, where he will have to give account for his present judgments on his fellow-men. He allows that criminals who have blinded people, or mutilated them, deserve to be flogged, but he would not have them tortured. This Augustine entreats by the mercy of Christ. Doubtless the magistrate bears not the sword in vain. But the principles of the State are one thing: those of the Church another. Augustine would argue on other lines if he were not corresponding with a Christian. He is conscious that Christians are under a condition of exasperation. He pleads that they should not be stained with the blood of their enemies.

Much in the same spirit of forbearance and deprecation of reprisals Augustine wrote in the same year 412[2] to the very distinguished State official, Marcellinus, asking that copies of Official Acts concerning the Donatists should be set up with all publicity and recited in the Church at Hippo; but at the same time making it a matter of conscience that Catholics must exercise leniency towards religious fanatics. He is sure that a magistrate can mitigate the penalties of the law. It is a case in which appeal should be made to the Emperor. He warns Marcellinus that if Donatists are sentenced to death they will be honoured as martyrs. Augustine has himself drawn up a summary account of the Conference held with the Donatist chiefs at Carthage in the previous year. The whole letter breathes the spirit of Christian charity.

All this gives a very different view of Augustine's principle and character from that frequently held. It would

[1] Letter 134, A.D. 412.

[2] Letter 139, A.D. 412.

be difficult to be more unhistoric and more unjust than to represent Augustine as a Torquemada born before his time. That his unhappy misinterpretation of the Scripture words formed a deadly precedent, and led to appalling consequences, is indeed only too painfully true. But Augustine is not the only great thinker who failed to anticipate the consequences of his teaching: consequences from which, it may be safely said, no man would have recoiled more completely.

The student of history will compare the unhappy use made of this precedent for coercion by Bossuet against the Huguenots, and by Balmes in his instruction of the Spanish Church in the nineteenth century. In neither case had these theologians the excuse, such as it is, of severe provocation.

It is clear that Augustine's activity in this department was resented by the legal authorities. The Bishop persisted, and such magistrates as were Christians did not see their way to refuse his petitions, but cordially wished he would confine himself to his proper sphere.

Macedonius, for example, writes granting Augustine's request,[1] but adding, deferentially yet firmly: "You say that it is the function of your priesthood to intervene in behalf of the accused, and that unless you obtain your request you have no right to be offended. I very greatly doubt whether this claim can be justified from religion."[2]

Macedonius appeals to the principles of the Church. According to the practice of the Church restoration is allowed only once after Baptism in the case of serious sin. To allow sins to go unpunished is to lower the standard. He considers that exemption for penalty has been pleaded for cases in which such exemption has done no good whatever.

To this criticism Augustine sent an admirable answer:[3]

[1] Letter 152.
[2] Letter 152, § 2.
[3] Letter 153, A.D. 414.

"You ask me why I maintain that it is part of our priestly office to intercede in behalf of the guilty, and why I consider it derogatory to my office if the petition is not allowed. You say that you are not sure that this is a proper inference from religion. For if the Church granted restoration to the penitent only once, how can it require that crime of every sort should be forgiven? To advocate such laxity would be a sin against the social order."

Augustine replies[1] that this severity would frighten any one who did not know how gentle and humane Macedonius really was. Augustine certainly by no means condones a sin, nor has the slightest wish that it should go unpunished. But while you abhor the sin you must pity the sinner. And the more you abhor the sin the more you must desire the sinner's conversion. It is easy to hate bad men because they are bad: it is less common, but it is religious, to love them because they are men. Augustine held that no other place for moral correction existed beyond the present world. For after this life a man would possess exactly what he had acquired. Charity, therefore, prompts us to intercede for the guilty for fear they should end this life by a punishment which involved a further punishment which would never come to an end.

Clearly, then, such intercession is a work of religion. Augustine appeals to the Divine benevolence toward the evil, taught by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount (S. Matt. v. 44, 45). Doubtless Divine patience might be abused, but it was exercised none the less (Rom. ii. 3–6).

Augustine propounds the theological principles and motives to the legal mind. God is the only judge whose decisions need not be revised, for He alone is incapable of being deceived. And yet He sends the sun to shine on the evil as well as on the good,

[1] Letter 153.

and sends rain upon the just and also upon the unjust.

Macedonius must also remember that persons who are liberated from the severity of the State are punished by the Church; are removed from the Altar, and compelled to penitence.

If there are relapses even after such penitential discipline, yet God still continues to the scandalous offender the gifts of nature, and still offers him the grace of salvation. And although the Church no longer gives him a place even for the humblest penitence, yet God has not forgotten to be patient towards him. And Augustine drew a very striking picture of a penitent soul pleading for restoration:

"Either grant me again a place of repentance or suffer me in despair to live as I please. Or if you call me back from such an evil course, tell me whether it will profit me anything in the future life if in this life I resist the seductions of pleasure; if I chasten my body, and withdraw myself even from lawful and permissible things; if by my penitence I afflict myself more grievously than before; weep more profusely, live far better, maintain the poor more generously, burn more ardently with charity which covers the multitude of sins." Certainly, says Augustine, no one would be so mad as to tell him that all this would profit him nothing in the future life. The Church, Augustine considered, could not venture to allow restoration of the offender more than once for fear of lowering the moral level of Christian life. But God goes further than the Church dare venture. The long-suffering of God leads men to repentance.

There is the case of the woman brought by the Pharisees before our Lord. Christ called them back to mercy, by an appeal to their own consciences. Augustine thinks that if the woman's husband had been present he would have been moved to spare the guilty one. For since Christ here warned off the

judicial accusers, the injured person could scarcely fail to learn the lesson of mercy and be reluctant to make his wife a public example.

Augustine recalls[1] a day when Macedonius himself interceded in the Church at Carthage in behalf of a cleric with whom his bishop was justly indignant. If it is right for Macedonius to mitigate the severity of ecclesiastical discipline, it must be right for a bishop to mitigate the severity of secular discipline, especially in a trial where the life of the accused is at stake.

And here Augustine appeals to Macedonius[2] on the ground of the magistrate's goodness. He calls him good in spite, he says, of the words of Christ, "There is none good save one, that is God." This leads the Bishop to insinuate the lesson that all human goodness is imperfect. We call him good in whom good exceeds the evil: and him best who sins the least.

Quoting Seneca,[3] whose letters to S. Paul, he says, still exist, "He who hates the bad must needs hate all men," Augustine adds: "And yet the bad are to be loved in order that they may cease to be bad."

As to Macedonius's fear that ecclesiastical intervention[4] in criminal cases would render judicial action nugatory, Augustine denies it. Both imperial and paternal power have undoubtedly the right of discipline; but the intercessions of a bishop are not contrary to secular authority.

So much depends upon the motive which induces men to spare.[5] Certainly a magistrate may grant a bishop's intercession for an offender, and yet the leniency make the offender nothing better. But then the intention must be remembered. The purpose of the intercession is none the less excellent, in spite of its failure to improve the offender.

Thus the severity of the magistrate is good,[6] and the

[1] Letter 133, § 10.
[2] Letter 153, § 12.
[3] Letter 153, § 14.
[4] Letter 153, § 16.
[5] Letter 153, § 17.
[6] Letter 153 § 19.

leniency of the interceding person is good. The former is to be feared and the latter not to be despised.

Certainly to plead that a thief need not restore what he had taken[1] would be to become a party to the fraud.

Then, of course, there are cases in which the person interceding may be deceived;[2] and the magistrate may know what the Bishop does not.

So Augustine, before the letter ended, had written almost a small treatise for the magistrate's use, extending to six-and-twenty sections, full of reason and insight into human nature, and shrewd reflections, and all of course expressed in terms of persuasive eloquence.

Macedonius was greatly captivated by this letter. He sent a short but extremely grateful reply,[3] acknowledging himself convinced by the Bishop's explanations, which were so replete with penetration, knowledge, sanctity; while his intercessions for offenders so marked by humility that the magistrate would feel inexcusable unless he consented.

Augustine replied that although he was unable to discover[4] in himself the wisdom which Macedonius ascribed to him, yet he was profoundly indebted to the writer's kindliness, and rejoiced that his work commended itself to such a reader. Most of all he rejoiced that Macedonius was an ardent follower of the truth. No one can truly be a lover of man unless he is first a lover of truth. Thereupon the Bishop seizes the occasion to dwell on the theme that the meaning and the blessedness of life is only to be found in God.

The so-called Conference of 411, when the Donatists were forced by the State to conform to the Catholic Church, was one of the strangest parodies of Reunion ever invented. The reluctant and despairing leaders of the sect were driven by imperial officials into the

[1] Letter 153, §§ 20 and 31.
[2] Letter 153, § 22.
[3] Letter 154.
[4] Letter 155.

Catholic Church. One result was that suicidal frenzy was intensified.[1] One of the oddest letters Augustine ever wrote was sent to a Donatist priest in the diocese of Hippo. This unfortunate man was ordered to be arrested and brought to church. He threw himself down a well to escape conformity. He was brought up again, seriously injured, and scarcely in a mood to attend to Augustine's remonstrances and exhortations. Seldom was logic more futile, or argument more misplaced, than in Augustine's reasonings with this unhappy victim of imperial and ecclesiastical coercion. Augustine insists on the educational and corrective value of coercive measures, illustrated in the Divine punishment of the rebellious Israelites, and the violent Conversion of S. Paul; insists that much good may result from a father flogging his son; distinguishes between martyrdom false and true—false when endured without charity, which, says the Bishop, was the case with the Donatists: "For if I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing;" repeats again the fatal interpretation: "Compel them to come in."

What impression Augustine's reasonings made on the suicidal tendencies of the despairing sectarian has not been recorded. But the hopelessness of curing the effects of violence by the use of logic and history does not seem to have dawned upon the great writer's mind. He seems to have had no misgivings. It never occurs to him that the situation which he deplored was one for which coercive measures were largely responsible.

No summary of this Conference with the Donatist Bishops can be complete without a reference to the tragic fate of its President.

Two years after the date of the Conference the imperial representative in Africa, Count Heraclian, revolted from his master Honorius. Count Marinus was sent to Africa in the Emperor's interests, and Heraclian was

[1] Letter 173.

captured and executed. Marinus was commissioned to pass judgment on all the supporters of the late revolt.

It appears from Augustine's account that this act of retaliation was carried out with haste, indiscriminately, and with gross injustice. Vengeance fell on the innocent as well as on the guilty. Suspicion easily lighted on the wrong persons. Private jealousy and spite found an opportunity to requite personal dislikes under pretext of loyalty to the State. Solitary accusations unsupported by further evidence were allowed to ruin men.

These were the circumstances which the Donatists are said to have utilised for taking revenge on the President Marcellinus. He was accused with having supported the usurper Heraclian. So was his elder brother the Proconsul Apringius. It will be remembered that Augustine had written to both brothers entreating them not to be over-severe with Donatist offenders (Letters 133, 134). Count Marinus had them both arrested and imprisoned. Augustine was in Carthage at the time. A distinguished State official, Cæcilian, a Churchman and a friend, assured him in the strongest terms that they were safe. And the Bishop left the city with that assurance. Then like a thunderclap came the news that both the brothers had been suddenly executed.

Augustine was almost stunned by the terrible news. Suspicion fell on Cæcilian that, in spite of his assurances and professions, he had incited Count Marinus to an act of judicial murder for private reasons of his own. Augustine kept silence for a considerable time, overwhelmed. At last Cæcilian wrote to ask the Bishop why he did not write?

That question produced such a letter[1] as Augustine had seldom written. It is a letter in which the intensity of grief and affection for the dead were mingled with the strongest moral indignation against all aiders and

[1] Letter 151, A.D. 413.

abettors of the cruel deed, together with wonderful self-restraint and measured utterance; a lofty refusal to credit the popular suspicion that Cæcilian could have perpetrated such loathsome insincerity; and a courtesy and deference which must have made the words of condemnation stinging and scathing beyond description if Cæcilian were really guilty.

Quite a number of Augustine's correspondents were persons of eminence in the State, who wrote to him for advice or instruction. Count Boniface,[1] evidently perplexed by the diversities of African religion, wrote to inquire what was the difference between a Donatist and an Arian? This led Augustine to write another most important account of the Donatist controversy. He explains that an Arian is a person who maintains that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are different substances, whereas the Donatist, like the Catholic, acknowledges one substance of the Trinity; although, Augustine adds, the Donatists, in their desire to strengthen their position, made overtures to the Arian Goths, and minimised the difference about the doctrine of the Trinity. Augustine also tells Boniface how the Donatist schism arose.

Augustine paints an extraordinary picture of sectarian fanaticism and violence among the Donatists.[2] They tramped the country in troops, and fell on travellers, wounding and slaughtering them. Sometimes they incited and provoked magistrates on circuit to be their executioners. A story is told of a magistrate who pretended to comply with their request, ordered them to be bound, and left them, thereby securing time to escape their threats and violence.

Augustine was naturally led to talk of horse and mule which have no understanding, and of the necessity of imposing restraint on the violence of those who were out of their mind.

[1] Letter 185, A.D. 417. [2] Letter 185, § 12.

These considerations encouraged Augustine to believe in the advantage of force.[1] Runaway slaves, and debtors unwilling or unable to pay for goods supplied to them, found conversion to the Donatists an effective method of escape from their liabilities, for neither owner nor creditor were inclined to face the clubs of the Circumcellions, or to have their houses burnt above them. The country was under mob regulations. The sectarians did exactly what they pleased, played grim practical jokes on their victims when the fancy served them. For instance, they harnessed an educated and cultured man to a mill, in place of an ass, and forced him round and round to grind the corn. Authority looked the other way, and ignored what it could not prevent. Terrorised sufferers dared not complain. Hardly a Church[2] of the Catholic Communion was safe from outrage. Hardly a road was secure to travellers. Not only laymen and clerics were sufferers, says Augustine, but even the Catholic Bishops (we note his triple division) were placed in a deplorable dilemma. Either they were silent, and thereby unfaithful to their duty of proclaiming the truth; or else they spoke, and brought calamity, not only on themselves, but upon all their people. It seems clear from this that fanatics must have been very numerous.

Under these circumstances, says Augustine, who could question the necessity of appealing to the State in the persons of the Christian Emperors?[3] And here Augustine explains to Count Boniface his own conception of the existing relation between Church and State. The objection had been raised that the Apostles did not desire coercive legislation against their opponents. Augustine points out that circumstances had changed. There was no Christian Emperor in the Apostolic Age. Those were the days in which the kings of the earth stood up against the Lord and against His Anointed.

[1] Letter 185, § 15.
[2] Letter 185, § 18.
[3] Letter 185, §§ 18 and 19.

But now that Emperors were Christian the words applied to them: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be learned, ye that are judges of the earth: serve the Lord in fear": that is, repress irreligion by just severity.[1] Illustrations of this asserted kingly duty are given from Hezekiah to Nebuchadnezzar. And here Augustine formulates the mediæval conception of the duty of the State to the Church: "What sober-minded person could say to Kings, 'Care not by whom the Church of your Lord is in your Kingdom restrained or oppressed; it is no business of yours who in your Kingdom is religious or sacrilegious'; since you cannot say to them, 'It is no business of yours who is chaste or who is unchaste in your Kingdom'? Why should adultery be punished and sacrilege permitted? Is it a lighter thing that a man should not keep faith with God than that a woman should be faithless to her husband?"[2] Thus Augustine could not conceive a religious State ignoring offences against religion.

At the same time he saw quite clearly[3] that it was an immeasurably better thing that men should be led to the worship of God by instruction rather than compelled by force. But he thought that although the way of freedom was better, yet the way of coercion was not altogether to be neglected.

Consequently disobedience is to be coerced: "Compel them to come in."[4]

At the same time Augustine himself and others of the African Bishops[5] had been formerly opposed to compulsory communion. They had held that force should only be exerted defensively to protect Catholics from Donatist violence. And this view was expressed in a Canon of the Council of Carthage in 414.

This decision of the Council of Carthage[6] was sent to the Emperors with a request that they would endorse

[1] Letter 185, § 19.
[2] Letter 185, § 20.
[3] Letter 185, § 21.
[4] Letter 185, § 24.
[5] Letter 185, § 25.
[6] Letter 185, §§ 26 and 27.

it as a law of the State. But the appearance of a Bishop at Court disfigured by scars of Circumcellion violence determined the Emperor to legislate on severer lines. Honorius accordingly ordered the infliction of fines,[1] and insisted on enforcing the return of the Donatists to Catholic Unity.

On the arrival of this Law in Africa many immediately flocked into the Church,[2] including many ignorant persons unable to distinguish between the two Churches. But, on the other hand, these defections filled the remaining sectarians with the madness of despair. Some were prepared to commit suicide rather than be converted, and to throw the responsibility of their conduct upon the Catholics. Well, reflects Augustine, if the House of David can only be at peace by the death of Absalom what alternative[3] remains but to weep his death, and be thankful for peace?

After all, reflects the Bishop, there is another side to the picture. If Boniface were to see the joy of these converts to the Catholic Congregation, and their appreciation of Sacraments which they had been taught to despise as false, he would feel that coercion ought to be practised, whatever effect it might have on a certain number of desperate men.[4]

"Put it," says Augustine, "in the form of a simple illustration. Suppose two men in a house which you know is certain to fall. You try to warn them, but neither will come out. One says that if you try to force him he will kill himself. Will you not risk his committing suicide in your desire at least to save the other who has no such suicidal proclivities?"[5] This, in the writer's opinion, was parallel to the Donatist difficulty.

Among phrases to be noted in this important Letter 185 are "sacramentum altaris" (§ 24), and that the

[1] Letter 185, § 28.
[2] Letter 185, § 29.
[3] Letter 185, § 32.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] Letter 185, § 33.

Donatists "extra ecclesiam et contra ecclesiam ecclesiæ sacramenta tenuerunt" (§ 46).

To appreciate at its full value this remarkable series of letters on the Donatist Controversy, it is well to remember that in addition to those there still exists a folio volume of Augustine's set treatises on the same subject. These letters are his minor efforts on the theme. But the facts and the principles, the history and theology contained in them make it possible to gain a fairly complete view of the whole course of that tragical separation which inflicted such injury on African Christianity. If Augustine had written nothing else, these alone would form a claim to unusual distinction.

CHAPTER V

LETTERS ON THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE[1]

THE letters on Pelagianism extend across the last sixteen years of the great writer's activity, from 414 to 430. During that period occasional letters appeared on the Donatist Controversy. But the absorbing interest of his mind was the great subject of Divine Grace.

I

The theological standpoint of Pelagius is very plainly shown in his celebrated letter to Demetrias on the occasion of her taking the veil in 413. In that letter he explains that his[2] practice when giving instructions in religious life is always to lay great stress on the capability of human nature. He wants to banish the word "impossible," and to convince human indolence how much it is able to do[3] by its own exertions. Accordingly he exalts the power of the human will.[4] God gave us freedom of choice, made us capable of good and evil. And what the capacities of human nature are for moral excellence can be seen in the Pagan philosophers who were pure and self-denying and benevolent and

[1] Out of the enormous literature on this subject it may be sufficient to mention: Mozley, *Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination;* Hermann Reuter, *Augustinische Studien*, 1887; Mausbach, *Die Ethik des heiligen Augustinus*, two vols., 1909; Duchesne, *Histoire Ancienne de l'Église.*

[2] In S. Augustine's *Works,* Gaume's Edition, Tom. II. Appendix, pp. 1380 ff.–1412.

[3] Letter to Demetrias, § 2.

[4] *Ibid.* § 3.

unworldly. Whence came all this goodness unless out of the goodness of human nature? It all shows how men without God were able by the power bestowed on them in their creation to please Him. If human nature is in itself capable of this high excellence, how much more can a Christian accomplish, taught as he is by Christ and aided by the help of Divine Grace? Here, then, the distinctive Christian term occurs. Pelagius recognises Grace. But Grace nowhere means for him what it meant for the Church. It nowhere means the supernatural influence of the indwelling Christ within the soul.[1] What Pelagius finds in human personalities is a "naturalis sanctitas" of which conscience is an evidence.

He quotes numerous examples from the Old Testament of human perfection. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for instance, perfectly fulfilled the will of God.[2] Job was an evangelist before the Gospel, and an apostolic disciple of the Apostles before the Apostolic teaching had been given. In his psychology the will is *always* free to determine which of two courses it will take.[3]

Pelagius reiterates his interpretation of religious history by observing that the Patriarchs who attained excellence without the guidance of the Law are no doubt proof of the natural goodness of mankind. Their Creator had endowed their nature, long before the Law was given, with capacities sufficient for achieving righteousness. He admits that in process of time the moral level deteriorated. In his opinion the Law was then revealed in order to enable men by admonition to recover their earlier excellence.

He acknowledges that we have a difficulty in doing good. But that difficulty is to be traced to nothing but habit and neglect from childhood onward. This habit undoubtedly becomes a second nature; it resists us

[1] Letter to Demetrias, § 4, p. 1383. [2] *Ibid.* § 6.

[3] *Ibid.* § 8. Quibus liberum est unum semper ex duobus agere. cum semper utrumque possimus.

now that we are trying to exert a better will. We wonder why, in this ignorance contracted by indolence, sanctity seems as if it were conferred upon us by another rather than by ourselves. But the truth is, that this is caused by our long experience in evil and the absence of habitual continuance in good.

Nevertheless, urges Pelagius, if primitive men before the Law was given achieved such excellence, what ought not to be possible for us after the Advent of Christ?—For we who have been instructed by the Grace of Christ, and born again to a better manhood, and cleansed by His Blood, and encouraged by His example.

These sentences might seem to have a Catholic meaning. But they do not represent that meaning as Pelagius uses them. They are phrases of ecclesiastical tradition which Pelagius could employ in a sense by placing his own construction upon them. They do not convey the Catholic doctrine of the Grace of Christ.

The whole of the letter encourages self-reliance to an extraordinary degree. Much is said of studying Scripture. Very little is said of prayer. The need of help to overcome our weakness is not part of the Pelagian conception. He pictures God[1] and the angels witnessing the Christian conflict. But God is Spectator rather than Helper. There is no reference to infusion of strength.

If human weakness pleads that the task is hard and beyond[2] the power of the frailty of the flesh, Pelagius replies that this plea accuses God of twofold ignorance: ignorance of what He has created, and ignorance of what He has commanded. As if He can forget the limitations of the nature which He created and imposes upon it commandments which it is unable to fulfil. Do we suppose that God condemns men for disobedience

[1] Letter to Demetrias, § 14, p. 1395. [2] *Ibid.* § 16, p. 1396.

which they cannot avoid? No one knows the measure of our strength better than He that gave that strength.

Accordingly Pelagius fixes attention on texts which command the ideal.[1] The Christian is to be blameless and immaculate in the midst of a perverse generation, a shining light in the world. There is remarkable confidence in the power of the unassisted will to fulfil all this. Pelagius appeals to the texts which inculcate responsibility and affirm our freedom. But he passes in silence those which confirm our weakness and cry aloud for help. Demetrias is repeatedly exhorted to act, and to make herself acceptable to Christ. But the stress is laid entirely on her own ability. It is even strange to notice how invariably and instinctively every Apostolic passage is left out which ascribes spiritual progress to God and the influence of His Grace.[2] Demetrias is to control her thoughts by the study of the Law of God. Even when Pelagius at last quotes the Apostolic words: "Now I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," it does not appear to mean for Pelagius the indwelling, co-operating Christ, but rather the product of human imitation of a Divine example.

And when Pelagius comes to acknowledge that this ideal is a great undertaking, he supports the Christian effort,[3] not by suggesting an appeal to God for strength, but simply by reminding Demetrias of the greatness of the reward to those who are successful.

Thus the principal characteristic of the letter to Demetrias is its consistent and evidently deliberate omission of the doctrine of supernatural and moral aid enabling man to do and become what otherwise he could not.

The theory of Pelagianism, then, is essentially and fundamentally a theory of the goodness of human nature; the power of the human will to realise the

[1] Letter to Demetrias, § 17, p. 1397.
[2] *Ibid.* § 27, p. 1409.
[3] *Ibid.* § 28, p. 1409.

Divine ideal and achieve its destiny by its own inherent strength, independently of any further support than nature supplies. It is a theory which leaves no room for Grace. Grace in the sense of supernatural strength imparted is obviously superfluous in the Pelagian view. The term may still be employed and was freely employed. It was impossible not to use a term so characteristic of Christian thought. But other meanings were assigned to it.

1. Sometimes Pelagians identified Grace with Nature. Grace denoted the natural endowments with which man was created: the essential gifts of our spiritual constitution. Thus Grace was the same thing as Free Will. To assert that the power of the will was not enough was to disparage the Creator. To say that we cannot do what God commands is to say that God commands the impossible. But this dishonours Him. The Grace of God, then, is the same thing as the gifts of the natural man.

2. Pelagianism freely allowed that Grace might have a further meaning. For clearly there was one thing which men obviously require in addition to the power of their will and the capacities inherent in their nature. That one thing is instruction. They must be told what the Divine Will is. Enlightenment in the ideals of the moral Christian Law is essential. The will must be informed. Grace, then, may be taken in this larger sense to represent the Revelation of Truth and Duty: God telling us what we ought to do and then leaving us to do it; for which our unaided will is enough. Of course instruction includes example. There is the example of Christ, which is given us for imitation. This also comes under the heading of Grace. The Pelagian admitted all this, so long as the integrity and independent sufficiency of the will for the purpose of achieving our eternal destiny was in no way compromised.

3. Then, further, Grace might receive another mean-

ing. It might denote Forgiveness of Sins. This certainly was requisite in addition to human capabilities.

4. One last concession was made to the advocate of Grace. It was admitted that there might be encouragements to do God's Will which would enable a man to do that Will more easily. More easily: that was the phrase. The illustration given is that of a boat on the water. It will reach its destination more easily with a sail than with oars. But the thing can be done with oars only. ("Velo facilius, remo difficilius: tamen et remo itur." Sermon 156, § 13.)

But Pelagianism insisted that the credit of the achievement belonged to man. It was man who took the initiative in matters of faith. It was man who merited God's approval by the use of his unaided will. Accordingly nothing was more abhorrent to Pelagius than the famous sentence in Augustine's *Confessions:* "Give [grace to do] what Thou commandest and then command what Thou wilt." On the contrary, Pelagius did not hesitate to say, "God made us human, we made ourselves righteous." (See Letter 177, § 1.)

II

To this optimistic view of human nature as it now exists Augustine's teaching presents the exact antithesis.

1. First of all he insists on the powerlessness of the unaided will for good. Unquestionably man was endowed with freedom of decision. And nothing is so much in our power as the will itself (*De Libero Arbitrio,* iii. 7). Nevertheless to speak as if the tendency of the will was towards good is to contradict the facts of experience. There is no such thing as natural sanctity: no moral goodness at all as a product of the unaided will. The tendency of human nature is towards evil. It never achieves the Divine ideal. The picture of

ready compliance with Divine commands which Pelagius has drawn is fiction and nothing else. He has ignored the maladies of the will. The will can exist without the power. We will and we are not able. (Letter 157, § 10.) There is the weakness of the will. The will is "tanto liberior quanto sanior." (Letter 157, § 8.)

Augustine contrasts the general Pelagian view with S. Paul's confession in the Roman Epistle. It is the latter which represents the experience of humanity.

To represent the human will as requiring nothing more than instruction in moral ideals betrayed an ignorance of human incapacity which in Augustine's opinion was positively tragic. Nothing was more certain in human experience than the powerlessness of moral ideals to get themselves obeyed. We acknowledge their excellence, but we do not fulfil them. Nay, more. The very fact that a thing is forbidden awakens resistance and increases its attractions. To our perversity prohibition increases desire. And if this is the case with a comparatively low moral standard, the higher the standard is raised the more powerless the will to achieve it. If the letter of the law is not accomplished, still less is its spirit. Hence all moral instruction becomes a ministration of condemnation and a ministration of death. It tells us what to do and then sits in judgment upon us for not fulfilling it. All these ideas are commonplaces of Augustine's teaching. The most brilliant exposition of them occurs in the great treatise on the Spirit and the Letter. The Letter is the moral commandment. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit, the Giver of grace and moral strength to accomplish.

When Pelagius taught that what Pagans and Jews had accomplished before Christ came, Christians ought, *a fortiori*, to accomplish now that they had the additional advantages of Christ's illuminating instruction and example, the British monk forgot that Christ had made fulfilment immeasurably more difficult because He

had raised the standard in the Sermon on the Mount to the highest conceivable levels of sublimity. And the light-hearted way in which the Pelagian could talk of fulfilling Christ's ideal and imitating Christ's example was to men of Augustine's disposition positively appalling. The imitation of Christ is an aim which should fill the best of men with the profoundest of despair if they are expected to attempt it in their own unassisted strength.

2. How is this weakness of the will accounted for? It is accounted for by the sinful condition of human nature. Augustine ascribes the origin of this universal sinfulness to the Fall. The solidarity of mankind involving the whole race in a state of transmitted inferiority — this is Original Sin. Humanity is debased. Rom. v. 12 is rendered "in whom" [that is, in Adam] "all sinned." It should be noted here that the fact of universal sinfulness is one thing; the explanation of its cause is another. Pelagius disputed the explanation, but failed to do justice to the fact. His view of sin was exceedingly superficial, while that of Augustine was profound. For Pelagius sin was merely an act. For Augustine it was an abiding condition or state.

Augustine insists that sin is not what Pelagius thinks it is. It is not a mere deed which passes away leaving the personality essentially unchanged. On the contrary, it involves the doer in a permanent condition of sinfulness. This sinful condition means a tendency towards evil and a weakening of the moral nature. The sinful individual is in an abnormal and enfeebled state. To present him with the moral ideal is as effective as to tell the paralysed to walk. That is exactly what his condition makes impossible. Augustine has analysed this feebleness of the enslaved will most strikingly in the pages of his *Confessions*.

The remedies which Pelagianism provided for this afflicted condition were perfectly futile. They were merely external applications to heal a deeply rooted

internal malady. Human nature required a complete renewal. Nothing less than entire regeneration of the inner self could meet the case. Instruction is not enough. And forgiveness is not enough. The nature itself must be cleansed and purged and strengthened. The Pelagians in Augustine's opinion are not defenders of free will. They are its "inflatores et præcipitatores" (*De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, § 27). They foster its pride and encourage its ruin. Neither knowledge of the Divine Law, nor natural ability, nor forgiveness of sins is the same thing as the grace given by Jesus Christ. Grace enables us to fulfil the moral law. It sets our nature free from the dominion of our sinfulness (*ib.*, *Works*, X. 1249).

3. Here then comes in the great Christian doctrine of Grace: that doctrine of which Augustine is the greatest exponent.

He is never weary of insisting what grace is not. It is not nature; not our constitutional endowments. The identification of grace with free will deprives Christianity of its supreme moral value, which consists in its supplementing nature, in reinforcing the will. Neither is grace equivalent to instruction. In the letter to Volusian (137) Augustine maintains that the two main purposes of the Incarnation correspond with the two main human defects, which are ignorance and inability. Accordingly, Christianity offers enlightenment to the one and strength to the other. The powerlessness of mere instruction in morals is proverbial. The setting Christ's example for our imitation is simply appalling if it is to be attempted by our own unaided will. The thing of all others which human nature needs is power. And that power or grace is exactly what Christianity supplies.

While Pelagius confined attention to Scriptural commands and ideals and exhortations to holiness, Augustine balanced this one-sided presentment of the Christian religion by an array of passages where an appeal is made to the help of God; or absolute dependence upon that

help is acknowledged; or He is praised for strength bestowed.

"It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do."

"What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

"Lead us not into temptation."

"Order my steps in Thy word and so shall no wickedness have dominion over me."

"I could not otherwise obtain her except God gave her me" (Wisd. viii. 21).

In this great doctrine of Grace Augustine simply exulted. Nowhere has he exhibited such brilliancy, such penetration. Nowhere does he carry a doctrine out more completely to its results. Every spiritual quality is a Divine gift.

If he thinks of love towards God, he has not the slightest doubt that this love does not originate in a movement of man towards God. It is awakened in man by the Spirit. "The love of God," by which Augustine understands man's love toward God, "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given us." Love towards God is God's own gift. ("Ut ea quæ facienda discendo novimus, etiam diligendo faciamus." Letter 188, § 3.)

If he thinks of prayer, he is certain that our very petitions to God for help are the work of the Spirit co-operating with us and according to our weak appeals any value they may possess.

If he thinks of faith, he is equally clear that God takes the initiative, not man. Faith does not originate in man's decision. Man cannot believe unless God gives him faith.

It is "according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith" (Rom. xii. 3). Christ Himself has said: "No man can come to Me, except the Father which sent Me draw him" (John vi. 44); "No man can come unto Me, except it be given unto him of the Father" (John vi. 15).

Augustine had not always appreciated this. In the

early period of his thought, before his episcopate, he maintained that our faith is due to ourselves, but our good works to God. But in his maturer judgment this was wrong. "I should not have said it," he wrote, "had I realised that faith itself is among the gifts of God which are bestowed by the Spirit" (*Retract.* xxiii. 2).

The conclusion from this doctrine of Grace is inevitable. And it is exactly the contrary to the Pelagian idea. For if love is a gift and faith is a gift and prayer itself, so far as it is acceptable, is a work of the Spirit within us, then it is clear that God takes the initiative, not man, and that grace begins and accompanies all human effort which possesses any moral worth. Accordingly, the conclusion is expressed in the celebrated sentence that God, when He crowns human merits, crowns His own gifts (Letter 194, § 19).

It is a striking illustration of Augustine's influence on Western religious thought that this sentence is embodied in the teaching of the Council of Trent.[1] Although, says the Council, much is attributed in Scripture to good works, "nevertheless God forbid that a Christian should either trust or glory in himself, and not in the Lord, Whose bounty towards all men is so great, that He will have the things which are His own gifts be their merits."

4. But what moved Augustine most of all, and to the depth of his being, was his keen realisation of the bearing of Pelagianism on the place of Christ in Redemption. The Pelagian theory of man's capacity to fulfil unaided his own destiny was destructive to the whole Christian conception of justification through Christ. They that are whole need not a physician. Christ did not come to call the righteous. Men who were competent to comply with the Divine requirements by their own independent strength could not owe their salvation to Christ. Then

[1] Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, p. 43. Session VI. Chap. XVI.

the Apostolic doctrine that there is no other name under heaven through Whom Salvation is possible beside the name of Christ is not true (*De Natura et Gratia*, § 46). Then is the cross of Christ made of none effect. Augustine cannot resist applying here the words: "This wisdom is not from above" (*ib.* § 6). It is only by Regeneration conferred through Christ that the human soul can acquire eternal life (*ib.* § 7). If Pelagius interposes here that he admits the necessity of Christ as an instructor how we ought to live, although not as a vital force of grace enabling us, Augustine retorts: "Here is a miserable condition of the human mind, which knows how to tame a lion but is ignorant how it ought itself to live. If the power of the unaided human will suffices to live aright, then Christ has died in vain. Pelagianism is a mere ignoring of the divinely given righteousness and a futile endeavour to establish a righteousness of our own" (*ib.* § 47).

According to the Pelagian view, heaven will contain two distinct types of men: those who have been justified by Christ and those who have been justified without Him. There is, then, more than one way into the life of God. There is a way with which Christ has nothing to do. But this is false. There is only one Mediator between God and men. Surely the Pelagians, exclaims Augustine, must see, without any further remarks from him, how abhorrent this theory should be to Christian minds (*Contra Julian.* vi. 81; *Works*, X. 1207).

Thus the truth is, that in the Pelagian scheme Christ sinks from Redeemer to the mere level of a prophet or teacher of morals and religion. His Incarnation and His Death are deprived of their life-giving power. He is no longer the Saviour of Humanity, but is degraded to a totally inferior position.

Consequently Augustine's work, viewed from this aspect, is a defence of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement. His accusation against the Pelagians was that they glorified the Creator at the expense of the

Redeemer. They laid such stress on Nature that they left no room for Grace.

III

Whenever the human mind has to dwell on complementary truths it is invariably liable to disproportion. It readily places undue stress on the one or else on the other.

1. Augustine saw with perfect clearness that the production of a saint is a work of God and man combined. But the exact proportion which ought to be ascribed to Divine action and to Human action, to Grace and to Free Will respectively, in the process, is a problem of exceeding difficulty. Augustine in the course of the discussion laid increasing stress on the Divine side in the production of a saint, until Grace dominated everything, and the formidable conclusions of Predestination emerged, and man appeared to be no more than the helpless clay in the hands of the Potter. Then the doctrine of universal Atonement, the Redemption of the race, became narrowed down, under the exigencies of an overwhelming conception of Divine power, to the Redemption of a selected few, arbitrarily selected from the *massa perditionis*. The clear Evangelical universality of the Apostolic belief that He "will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth," became forced into a strange self-contradiction of what it says; so that "all men" did not mean all men, but only all those men whom Providence for inscrutable, if just, reasons arbitrarily selected to eternal life.[1]

Augustine's correspondence brings out into exceedingly clear light the inability of Augustine's disciples to force these opinions on certain Catholics of the period. And it certainly is one of the most significant ironies

[1] Bossuet identified this with the Faith of the Church. (*Défense de la Tradition*, II. xiii. ch. x.) But he was not fair to Richard Simon. See rather Rottmanner, *Der Augustinismus*, 1892.

of theological development if it was against Augustine's extreme conclusions that the famous Vincentian Canon was formulated.

2. Nevertheless, the defects of Pelagianism are immeasurably more serious than any of the most rigorous conclusions of Augustine; for Pelagianism is simply the religion of the natural man. If logically carried out there is no Christianity left. Incarnation, Redemption, Grace, all disappeared, because they are made superfluous. The words may be retained. The presence of the Church's belief, the constant traditional use of the great expressions compelled the Pelagian to accept words which represented conceptions wholly incompatible with his ideals. Thus he retained the Baptism of Infants, for which his theory left no real room. But while he retained the words, he "reconstructed" their meaning. That is, he replaced the principles which they represented by something totally different to the Church's use of them.

No two better champions of the two religions could have been discovered. Each pleaded for the value of his own experience. Pelagius, the calm, dispassionate man of strong will and high principles, had apparently never known the fiery trials by which human life is too often rent in twain. He felt no need for anything which nature did not supply. Augustine was the exact antithesis. His stormy impulses and the passions of his youth had dragged him through degradations which gave tremendous power to his exposition of the doctrine of Grace. He is expounding that Grace upon which his whole religious security depends.

IV

In order to follow Augustine's Letters on this subject it is necessary to bear in mind the main facts concerning Pelagius and Celestius.

Pelagius was of British birth. He resided in Rome

sometime before the approach of the Goths in 410 : thence he escaped to Africa, visited Hippo when Augustine was not there. They were at Carthage together. But it was the time of the Conference with the Donatists (411) and the monk's peculiar theories were not observed. Pelagius then went on to Palestine. His disciple Celestius, who was also in Carthage, did not escape undetected. Celestius attempted to get ordained ; but he was opposed by Paulinus, one of the deacons of the Church of Milan, who, at Augustine's request, wrote S. Ambrose's life. Paulinus accused Celestius of heresy before Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage. The consequence was, that Celestius could not get ordained. He removed at once to Ephesus, where he secured his aim.

Augustine was speedily informed of the Pelagian ideas. He wrote and preached in reply to them. He composed in 412 his treatises on the Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of Infants, also the great treatise on the Spirit and the Letter: all these for the benefit of his friend, Count Marcellinus. But he nowhere attacked Pelagius. On the contrary, he wrote him a friendly letter; expressing regard for his character, of this Pelagius afterwards made much use. (Letter 146.)

Meanwhile Pelagius settled at Jerusalem, where he ingratiated himself into the society of the Bishop John. Thereupon the old lion at Bethlehem began to growl. Jerome made rude references in his commentary on Jeremiah to a false antagonist, "the grunter," an *indoctus calumniator*, and his follower a "stolidissimus" individual "stuffed to repletion with Scotch porridge." The Pelagian theories have been reported at Bethlehem. Jerome, in a fierce reply to a correspondent, quotes Ecclesiasticus: "Why art thou proud, O dust and ashes?"[1] In God's sight shall no man living be justified. And here are men who talk of being without sin ; and who say that we are not supported in separate

[1] Ecclus. x. 9. Letter to Ctesiphon.

actions by Divine Grace, and identify Grace with Free Will. Jerome freely flings about the charge of sacrilege and blasphemy. Then, grappling with his unnamed but very obvious opponent, Jerome accuses him of teaching in private what he dare not preach openly, and calls upon him to imitate Jonah, and to say: "If this disturbance is on my account, take me and cast me into the sea."

Pelagius did not act on Jerome's advice. But Jerusalem and Bethlehem grew estranged. John of Jerusalem was well disposed towards his visitor, and ill disposed towards Jerome, of whose learned ferocity he was afraid.

Meanwhile movements were being matured in the Bishop's house at Hippo. The learned Spanish priest, Orosius, was on a visit there, consulting Augustine on doctrinal affairs. Augustine persuaded him to go on to Palestine. The motive announced was to consult S. Jerome on the subject of the Origin of the Soul. But there can be little doubt that another motive lay beneath. It was to prevent the Bishop of Jerusalem from committing himself to any approval of Pelagian ideas.[1] Augustine was not fortunate in his messenger. Orosius was full of zeal, but he was deficient in the qualities of a diplomatist. He exhibited no discretion. It may be that Jerome's influence enhanced his controversial vehemence. The result was that the Bishop of Jerusalem called him to attend a conference of clergy and to give a public explanation.[2] This was in 415. Orosius himself has left us his account of it, from which it is easy to see that he must have appeared to the Bishop of Jerusalem as an advocate of African Church opinions, attempting to enforce unquestioning deference to the views of Aurelius of Carthage and Augustine of Hippo. Orosius compares himself at Bethlehem to David called forth to meet the Philistine. He had come

[1] *Cf.* Duchesne, *Histoire Ancienne de l'Église*, iii. 218.
[2] Orosius, *Liber Apologeticus*, Chaps. 2–4.

from Father Augustine, and was seated at the feet of Jerome. In the Conference at Jerusalem he was asked what he had to say about false doctrine. He read before the Conference Augustine's letter to Hilary (Letter 157). Bishop John then directed that Pelagius should be admitted. Pelagius was asked whether he taught what Augustine condemned. To which he replied, "What is Augustine to me?" These words created scandal. But Bishop John brushed them aside by observing that he represented Augustine at that meeting. Whereupon Orosius confesses that he made the extremely unwise retort: "If you represent Augustine's person, follow Augustine's faith." Orosius was then asked what he had to say against Pelagius? Orosius soon felt that he had gone too far. The Bishop of Jerusalem was evidently ready to act as judge. It now appears to have dawned on Orosius that he must not let the African decision be brought in dispute before a tribunal evidently favourable to Pelagius. Accordingly Orosius said that this was a discussion belonging to the Latin world and must be referred to Latin Judges. He secured that the whole question should be referred to Innocent of Rome. It was just as well. Bishop John spoke Greek, Orosius Latin. The discussion was conducted through an interpreter who was none too qualified for his task.

Indeed, the Bishop of Jerusalem entirely misunderstood Orosius; and on a subsequent occasion charged him with teaching heresy.

Pelagius's opponents in Palestine were discomfited but determined not to let matters stop where they were. Accordingly they resolved to appeal to the Metropolitan Eulogius, Bishop of Cæsarea. The subject, therefore, came before the Synod of Diospolis (or Lydda) in December 415. Augustine has preserved fragments of this Council in Letter 186 (§§ 31, 32, 33). It appears that Pelagius exerted much subtlety; gave plausible but evasive answers, which the Greeks, unfamiliar with the

intricacies of the Latin discussions, were unable to discriminate from orthodox belief. He seemed to anathematise what they required of him. He produced Augustine's courteous letter to him and flourished it as a certificate of his orthodoxy. Altogether he completely won his judges. He showed much cleverness and readiness, and an engaging frankness; with the result that the fourteen bishops who heard his explanations were quite prepared to acquit him of heresy.

That Synod of Diospolis holds an important place in Augustine's correspondence, as also in that of Popes Innocent and Zosimus. The news of Pelagius's acquittal filled Augustine with dismay. Jerome characterises it with his customary vigour. It was a great asset on the Pelagian side.

Some time elapsed before Augustine could obtain a copy of the Acta of the Council. But presently Orosius himself returned to Africa with information from Jerome and the report of the acquittal.

In a letter written about 414[1] to Hilary, the necessity of supernatural help over and above man's natural abilities, if he is to fulfil the Divine commands, is taught with characteristic earnestness. Augustine repeats in this letter (what he has written in the famous treatise on the Spirit and the Letter), that while the assertion that any other man, Christ alone excepted, ever lived absolutely without sin is permissible, the theory that free will is sufficient to fulfil the Divine commands without being assisted by the grace of God and the gift of the Holy Spirit, is to be anathematised and abominated.[2]

Free will is sufficient to good works if it be divinely assisted.[3] But there is no solid righteousness (whatever knowledge may exist), where a man is deserted by the support of God. Lead us not into temptation means do not desert us in temptation. This free will of ours

[1] Letter 157. [2] Letter 157, § 4. [3] Letter 157, § 5.

is free in proportion as it is healthy, and it is healthy in proportion as it is subject to Divine Grace. . . . Hence the petition "Order my steps in thy word, and so shall no wickedness have dominion over me."[1] It is not he who trusts in his own strength, but he who calls on the name of the Lord that shall be saved.[2]

Accordingly Augustine repeats some of his favourite phrases. God orders self-control and gives self-control: He orders it by the Law; He gives it by Grace; orders it by the letter and gives it by the Spirit. For the Letter without the Spirit killeth.[3] Here is the main principle of the famous treatise on the Letter and the Spirit.

Augustine then proceeds to expound his terrifying theory of the fate of infants dying unbaptised. The Pelagian discredited altogether the doctrine of Original Sin. According to his definition sin is an act of the individual will. Infants then have no sin. Consequently they cannot be condemned. Whether they die baptised or not they must be saved.

Augustine, defining sin as a condition of the entire fallen race,[4] from which no one was exempt, made Original Sin the basis of his whole discussion. This, as he understood it, was the meaning of the Pauline language, "By one man sin entered into the world and death through sin." Accordingly Augustine argued as follows. In Adam every individual is condemned. Salvation is only possible through regeneration. Regeneration is only given to the baptised. Those, therefore, who die unbaptised die unregenerate. And to die unregenerate is to be lost.[5] Generation is only through Adam. Regeneration is only through Christ.

Both theories are perfectly logical, granting their premises. Naturally they nowhere meet. The Pelagian does not appear to have reckoned that innocence is not the same as holiness. Augustine does not seem to have

[1] Letter 157, pp. 119—133.
[2] Letter 157, § 8.
[3] Letter 157, § 9.
[4] Letter 157, § 11.
[5] Letter 157, § 13.

asked why the Almighty should be so restricted by His own sacramental methods as to be unable or unwilling to bestow regenerating grace in any other way.

He assures his correspondent, Hilary, that those who desire to live in Christ must pay no attention to those who contradict the Apostles' teaching. The theory that sinfulness is not transmitted, but only affects us as a bad example, is to be absolutely rejected.[1]

Augustine informs Hilary[2] that he has discussed this subject in many treatises and sermons, because these errors had infected his own neighbourhood. They also exist in Carthage. Celestius had been living in that city; and was fairly on the way to the dignity of the priesthood, if his heresies had not been discovered and episcopally condemned. Celestius was unable to reconcile his theories concerning infants dying unbaptised with the prevalent ecclesiastical practice of the baptism of infants. For why should infants be baptised if they had no need to be redeemed? Augustine is reluctantly compelled to mention Celestius's name; for the Bishop suspects that this is the source which is disturbing Hilary's faith.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this letter to Hilary is the section on the relation of Christianity to wealth.[3] Celestius and his adherents upheld the ideal of poverty, of absolute renunciation of all possessions as the Christian duty of all rich men. They taught that if a rich man retained his riches he could not enter the Kingdom of God.

Augustine's reply to this is a most remarkable testimony to his power of seeing the two elements on both sides of a moral question. He observes to begin with that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all rich men, and yet they are the persons with whom many shall sit down in the Kingdom of Heaven. The beggar Lazarus also was poor, but he was admitted in Paradise into the bosom

[1] Letter 157, § 21. [2] Letter 157, § 22. [3] Letter 157, § 23.

of Abraham who was rich. These facts demonstrate to us that neither is poverty accepted as such, nor wealth condemned as such.

The followers of Celestius replied that the retention[1] of riches was permissible under the old Dispensation, but not after Christ's express command, "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow me."

Augustine answers:[2] This is only a partial and one-sided use of Christ's injunction. Christ said those words in reply to an inquiry. The inquiry was "What shall I do to obtain eternal life?" Christ did not say in reply, If thou wilt enter into life sell all that thou hast; but if thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments. When the rich young man replied that he had kept all these and asked, What lack I yet? Christ answered, If thou wilt be perfect go sell all that thou hast and give to the poor. To this also Christ added two things: first, by way of encouragement, Thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; secondly, Come, follow Me: lest the young man should imagine his renunciation of possessions would profit him unless he also followed Christ. Augustine thinks that the young man's claim to have kept all the commandments was spoken "arrogantius quam verius." But in any case Christ drew a clear distinction between the commandments of life and the counsels of perfection. Why, then, should Christians deny that obedience to the Commandments secures entrance into life, even if the counsel of perfection has not been followed?

This, says Augustine,[3] agrees with S. Paul's instructions for rich people (1 Tim. vi. 17–19). Surely the Apostle is not mistaken. He did not instruct Timothy to charge them that are rich in this world, that they sell all that they have and give to the poor; but that they were not to be proud, nor to trust in uncertain riches. It was the pride

[1] Letter 157, § 24.
[2] Letter 157, § 25.
[3] Letter 157, § 26.

of wealth and the faith in material possessions which brought Dives to the place of torment. It was not riches as such.

If his opponents infer from our Lord's reflection,[1] "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven," that a rich man who obeys S. Paul's instructions cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Augustine propounds a dilemma:

Either the Apostle contradicts our Lord, or else these Pelagians are mistaken.[2] No Christian will doubt which of these alternatives to adopt. I think it better for us to believe that these men do not understand, than to believe that S. Paul contradicted our Lord. Did not Christ add that what was impossible with men is easy with God?

On the other side Christ spoke of those who have "left houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for His Name's sake" (Matt. xix. 29). Christ spoke of renunciation as the condition of discipleship[3] (Luke. xiv. 33). He who renounces the world for the purpose of becoming Christ's disciple does certainly renounce all that the world contains. But renunciation of wealth may appear in various forms. It may consist in withholding love from our possessions; or in liberal distribution to the poor; or in transference to Christ of that faith and hope which some perversely place in riches. It may consist in the disposition and readiness to forsake father or mother or wife or child if Christ cannot be retained without forsaking them. Augustine quotes Cyprian's sentence on renunciation of the world in words but not in reality.[4] But Augustine is quite clear that rich men can truly renounce the world while retaining their possessions, and converting those possessions to a proper use, breaking their bread to the hungry, clothing the naked, and redeeming the captives.

[1] Letter 157, § 27.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Letter 157, § 34.
[4] *Ibid.*

Consequently these Pelagians may exhort if they will to higher courses so long as they do not condemn inferior ones.[1] If they exalt virginity they must not condemn the married state. Did not the Apostle say that each one has his special gift from God: one in one direction, one in another? Let them take the way of perfection and sell all that they have. But they must not condemn those who retain their possessions in a Christian spirit.

Augustine reinforces all this by an extremely telling reference to his own case.[2] "I who write these things was greatly drawn to love that way of perfection which the Lord described when he said to the rich young man, 'Go, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come follow Me:' and, not in my own strength, but by His Grace assisting me, I have so done. Nor will it be less accounted to me because I was not rich: for neither were the Apostles rich, who did the same before me. For he renounces all the world who renounces what he possesses and what he hopes to possess."

This way of perfection, then, has Augustine's emphatic preference. He will encourage others in it to the best of his power. Nevertheless he will never do it in such a way as to depreciate those who retain their possessions in a Christian spirit and make religious use of what they retain.

The African Episcopate put out its collective strength against the Pelagian heresy. Councils were held at Carthage[3] in 416 and at Milevis[4] in the same year; and letters were written by both these Councils to Pope Innocent at Rome. The Bishops invoked the authority of the Holy See to support their efforts. They are clearly apprehensive that the acquittal of Pelagius in the unfortunate Synod of Diospolis may prejudice Innocent's mind by concealing from him the serious nature of the

[1] Letter 157, § 37.
[2] Letter 157, § 39.
[3] Letter 175.
[4] Letter 176.

errors to which Pelagius in reality adheres. They insist, therefore, that if Innocent thinks that Pelagius was rightly acquitted so far as his expressions went, yet nevertheless the erroneous doctrine widely prevalent among his followers ought to be condemned. They call on Innocent to realise that Pelagianism is laying such stress on the natural abilities by which we are human, that it leaves no place for the Grace of God, by which we are Christians. For, according to Pelagian views, we ought not to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," although Christ Himself taught us so to pray; nor to pray lest our faith should fail, which our Lord did for S. Peter.

There is little doubt that this letter of the Council of Carthage represented Augustine's mind and influence, although his name does not appear in the list of the signatures.

At the Council of Milevis Augustine was present.[1] A letter similar in character to that of the Council of Carthage was sent to Innocent.

Augustine was apparently not entirely satisfied with this. At any rate he supported it in a longer letter, sent from Bishop Aurelius of Carthage, together with three of Augustine's intimate friends, Bishops Alypius, Evodius and Possidius, of whom the last became Augustine's biographer.

In this important letter on Pelagian ideas Augustine quotes the maxim which was to him peculiarly abhorrent: "God made us men, we made ourselves righteous." It would be impossible to conceive a maxim more irreconcilable with Augustine's experience. The effect of such teaching was to render a Saviour superfluous. It made human nature self-sufficient and independent of the Grace of God.

Augustine understands that Pelagius has supporters in Rome. They think that he does not really hold such

[1] Letter 176.

opinions. They appeal to the fact of his acquittal by the Bishops in the Council of Diospolis. Augustine explains that this acquittal was due to the fact that Pelagius employed the term "Grace" in one sense and his judges in another. Pelagius meant by "Grace" the endowment by which we are human. The Bishops meant by "Grace" the gifts whereby we are Christians.

Augustine suggests that Pelagius should be summoned to Rome and carefully examined on the sense which he attaches to the term "Grace." If he means that whereby men are divinely assisted to avoid sin and lead a holy life, then let him be acquitted.

But if he holds that "Grace" is the same as free will, or forgiveness, or moral commandments, then he is leaving out precisely those gifts which constitute Grace; the power to overcome temptation which is derived from the Ascended Christ. The prayer "Lead us not into temptation" is not a prayer that we may be granted the faculties which are natural to us as men. Nor is it a prayer that we may be forgiven. We have already prayed for that when we say "forgive us our trespasses." It is a prayer that we may be enabled to do that which is commanded.

The obvious distinction between Law and Grace is that the former commands and the latter enables.

Augustine sends Innocent a sample of Pelagian writings. It is the document which he answered in his treatise concerning Nature and Grace. He sends the Pope a copy of both; marking the passages which he wants Innocent to read, in order not to be burdensome. If Pelagius disowns authorship of the work which has been ascribed to him, that is no matter. Augustine will not press it. Only let Pelagius anathematise its contents.

The letter closes with a deferential assurance that the writers do not dream of adding anything to Innocent's amplitude of knowledge. The writers have explained their position in order to be reassured by the Pope's reply.

The Synod of Diospolis had of course acquitted Pelagius under a total misapprehension of his meaning. But their acquittal naturally promoted his influence and set the Catholic Bishops in grave perplexity. For Pelagius naturally flourished in their faces the decision of Diospolis as a certificate of his orthodoxy.

The indefatigable Bishop of Hippo wrote to John, Bishop of Jerusalem,[1] assuring him that he and his colleagues had been deceived. The disciples of Pelagius had brought one of their master's writings to Augustine. In that book Pelagius had employed the term "Grace" simply as an equivalent for "Nature"; and had contended vehemently that men are able to realise the ideal by the unassisted power of their own free will. How was it possible, Augustine asks, to harmonise this theory with the Apostolic cry: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" And why should Christ have prayed for S. Peter that his faith fail not if stability is in the power of our own will without any help from God?

Augustine is anxious to avoid prolixity, chiefly because he writes in Latin and his words will require to be interpreted in Greek. But Augustine sends a copy of Pelagius's own book for the Bishop to see. Also he sends his own book on *Nature and Grace* written in reply to it. He entreats Bishop John to teach Pelagius the true faith. He suggests some questions which the Bishops in Palestine should put to this erring mind. He requests that a copy of the Acts of the Synod of Diospolis should be sent to Africa. This is on behalf of the African Bishops in general. Nothing has reached them as yet but a fragment circulated by Pelagius himself. They are most anxious to possess a complete account of the whole Synod.

Innocent sent replies to the letters[2] which he had received from the Council of Carthage, the Council of Milevis, and the Five Bishops.

[1] Letter 179, A.D. 416.

[2] Letters 181, 182, 183.

First comes Innocent's reply to the Council of Carthage. Innocent speaks in lofty terms of the dignity of his See, and highly approves the conduct of the Bishops at Carthage in referring to his judgment. He commends them for knowing what is due to the Apostolic See.[1] For the Apostolic See is the final and completing endorsement of what is done elsewhere.[2]

This assertion of the claims of his See is really the principal part of Innocent's letter. He goes on at some length indeed to speak of the Pelagian contradiction to the doctrine of Grace.[3] He quotes the Psalmist's words: "Lord, be Thou my helper, leave me not neither forsake me, O God of my salvation" (Ps. xxvii. 9). He declares that the entire Psalter proclaims the necessity of Divine support. He represents the Christian doctrine as maintaining that through the cleansing of the New Regeneration God purges away in the laver of Baptism all past sin, and places the baptised in a condition which makes further progress possible; but that God does not refuse His Grace in the future. There must be daily remedies for the reparation of post-baptismal sin.

Innocent adds that it is unnecessary for him to say more, since the Bishops have said everything already.

Accordingly he reaches his conclusion. Whosoever assents to the opinion that we have no need of the

[1] Scientes quid Apostolicæ Sedi, cum omnes hoc loco positi ipsum sequi desideremus apostolum, debeatur, a quo ipse episcopatus et tota auctoritas nominis hujus emersit.

[2] Quem sequentes, tam mala damnare novimus quam probare laudanda. Vel id vero quid patrum instituta sacerdotali custodientes officio non censetis esse calcanda, quod illi non humana, sed divina decrevere sententia, ut quidquid quamvis in disjunctis remotisque provinciis ageretur, non prius ducerent finiendum, nisi ad hujus Sedis notitiam perveniret: ut tota hujus auctoritate justa qua fuerit pronuntiatio firmaretur, indeque sumerent cæteræ Ecclesiæ (velut de natali suo fonte aquæ cunctæ procederent, et per diversas totius mundi regiones puri latices capitis incorrupti manarent) quid præciperent, quos abluerent, quos velut cæno inemundabili sordidatos mundis digna corporibus unda vitaret.

[3] Letter 181, § 6.

Divine assistance (adjutorium) is an enemy of the Catholic Faith, and unworthy of our Communion. Such persons must be severed from the healthy Body until such time as he recants.

Innocent in replying to the Council of Carthage mentions by name each Bishop present. In replying to the Council of Milevis[1] he mentions two Bishops only and addresses the Synod collectively.

In this letter Innocent applies to himself what S. Paul had claimed, the care of all the Churches; commends the Council for consulting the Apostolic See as to what opinion ought to be maintained. He sees that the Bishops understand that responses to these inquiries are always sent through all the provinces from the Apostolic fount. Especially in matters of faith all his brothers and fellow-bishops should refer to Peter, that is to the author of their name and dignity.

After this introduction Innocent turns to the errors of Pelagius and his follower Celestius, both of whom he mentions by name. Innocent applies to them the words of the Psalmist (Hymnidicus): "Lo this is the man that took not God for his strength." To say that eternal life can be obtained by infants unbaptised[2] is "perfatuum." "For except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood ye have no life in you." This cannot be without Regeneration.

Wherefore Pelagius and Celestius are by Apostolic authority[3] to be deprived of ecclesiastical communion until they recover.

The letter is dated in the Consulship of Honorius and Constantius.

To the five Bishops, Aurelius of Carthage, Alypius of Thagaste, Augustine of Hippo, Evodius of Uzala, and Possidius of Calama, Innocent sent a separate reply:[4] a noteworthy tribute to their importance in the Pelagian dispute.

[1] Letter 182.
[2] Letter 182, § 5.
[3] Letter 182, § 6.
[4] Letter 183, A.D. 417.

This letter is more confidential.[1] Innocent does not know whether there are any followers of Pelagius in Rome. If they exist they have concealed themselves; and it is difficult to ascertain in so large a community.

Innocent has received certain documents, Acts of a Council, which some laymen have sent him. According to these documents Pelagius has been acquitted. But Innocent has his misgivings about the reality of all this. The internal evidence of the document seems to betray evasiveness. He hopes that there has been a genuine conversion.

In his letter to Peter and Abraham[2] Augustine says that baptised infants are to be regarded as believers. [This subject had already been discussed in Letter 98, see p. 290.] We have seen that Innocent in Letter 182 (p. 153), taught the necessity both of Baptism and Communion for salvation. Augustine says much the same in his treatise on the Forgiveness of Sin (Book I. 34). He tells us that Punic Christians called Baptism, Salvation, and the Sacrament of Christ's Body, Life. He regards it as an Apostolic tradition that without participation in Baptism and the Table of the Lord there is no way of entrance into eternal life. Thus, Scripture says, "He saved us by the Washing of Regeneration." Accordingly, unless infants are admitted by the divinely instituted Sacrament into the number of believers they will remain in the darkness.[3]

Here, in Letter 184 B, Augustine does not shrink from the tremendous negative side of this question.[4] He does not only say that infants if baptised are saved and are believers; but he proceeds to add that, if unbaptised, they are unbelievers and are condemned. He held, indeed, that their condemnation will be "minima pœna, non tamen nulla."[5] He asserts that there will be degrees

[1] Letter 183, § 2. [2] Letter 184 B, § 2.
[3] Works, Tom. X. pp. 214–215; *cf.* Book III 2, *ib.* p. 287).
[4] Letter 184 B, § 2.
[5] *De Peccat. Remis.* i. 21, in damnatione omnium mitissima.

of future penalty; basing this statement on the New Testament principle that it shall be more tolerable for one city than for another in the final account. But he maintains that there is no final third position between being saved and being lost; or, as he puts it, between *regnum* and *supplicium*. Nothing can deliver but the Grace of God. And that Grace Augustine here, as elsewhere, tied to the outward sign so inseparably that not Christ Himself could extend His Grace beyond it.

Augustine regards all human individuals as conceived in sin.[1] The Virgin Birth excepted Christ from this inheritance. [*Cf.* Letter 202 B, § 20. No soul except that of the one Mediator escaped contracting from Adam Original Sin, or was loosed without regeneration. Augustine puts this doctrine of the Virgin Birth more plainly elsewhere: "What was more pure than the Virgin's womb, whose flesh although 'de peccati propagine venit, non tamen de peccati propagine concepit'?" (Literal Interpretation of Genesis, Book X. 32. Works, Tom. III. 431). "Christ took the visible substance of the flesh from the flesh of the Virgin. The principle of this Conception came not from the side of man but far otherwise and from above" (*ib.* 35, p. 434).] Whatever is conceived in the ordinary course of nature requires to be born again. Carnal generation cannot dispense with spiritual regeneration.[2]

Augustine goes on to speak of the books which he has now completed of the work on *The City of God*. He has now got as far as Book XIV. The first five books are designed to refute those who advocated Polytheism as a source of temporal advantages. The next five apply to those who advocated Polytheism as a means of future blessedness. In this section comes his answer to Pagan philosophies. If his correspondents will read the later books they will find answers to their inquiries.

Some most important particulars about the Pelagian

[1] Letter 184 B, § 4.

[2] Letter 184.

controversy are given in the letter[1] addressed by Bishops Alypius and Augustine to Paulinus, Bishop of Nola. This is the letter which says that Pelagius was of British extraction: a fact which other writers have endorsed in forms more expressive than courteous. Thus, Prosper calls Pelagius the British snake, and Jerome, with his customary forcefulness, describes him as stuffed with Scottish porridge: "Scotorum pultibus prægravatus."[2]

A copy of one of Pelagius's writings had been sent by some of his admirers to Augustine. The Bishop thereupon wrote a reply (the Treatise on *Nature and Grace*), without mentioning Pelagius by name. That was written two years before the present letter. Augustine had reasons for omitting to name Pelagius. The Bishop had been favourably impressed by Pelagius's character, and had sent him a courteous note,[3] written in 413, which certainly did not commit its writer to very much, least of all to any endorsement of its recipient's peculiarities. It was extremely brief, remarkably so for Augustine, who scarcely knew how to write short notes. It only contained some hundred words in all. But Pelagius converted it to his purposes. It was much to be able to produce a kindly letter from the great leader of African religious thought. Augustine felt it necessary when writing his treatise on the acquittal of Pelagius by the Palestine Synod to explain what his letter to Pelagius was intended to convey. (See *De Gestis Pelagii*, §§ 50–53, where this letter is reproduced. Works, X. 510.)

In the present letter to Paulinus, Augustine explains that he had previously written against Pelagian errors without mentioning their advocate, because he hoped that Pelagius might be recovered by this indirect refutation and so a scandal might be avoided.

Augustine adds that reports of the two Councils of

[1] Letter 186, A.D. 417. [2] Cf. p 140.
[3] Letter 146.

Carthage[1] and Milevis had been sent to the Apostolic See before the Ecclesiastical Acts of the Province of Palestine, in which Pelagius was acquitted, had reached Africa. The reference of course is to the Synod of Diospolis or Lydda. Augustine also refers to his own letter to Innocent, and adds that the Pope had replied as was right and becoming for an occupant of the Apostolic See.

Augustine urges that Pelagius should be advised[2] to consider whether his acceptance by God was a reward of his merits; whether he first sought God or God first sought him; whether God did not care to seek and to save that which was lost. For if Pelagius sought God first it could only be as one who had no goodness of his own. If Pelagius believes in One Who justifies the evil, what else could he be but evil before he was justified?

Augustine dwells much in this letter[3] on the differences between moral commands and power to obey. It is the distinction which he has so magnificently explained in his great treatise on *The Spirit and the Letter*. The Law commands us what to do. But it is the Spirit which enables us to do it. Unless the Spirit of God infuses grace and strength to fulfil it, the letter of the Law condemns us for our failure to obey.

Here, as ever, Augustine reiterates:[4] What hast thou that thou didst not receive? If the Pelagian answers, My faith: Augustine replies, Faith is the gift of God. According as He hath given to every man the measure of faith. Human merit does not precede Divine Grace. But Grace when given may merit to be increased.

When questioned on the problem of Predestination[5]—why out of the same mass God should make one for honour and another for dishonour—Augustine admits that it is insoluble. The judgments of God are

[1] Letter 186, § 2.
[2] Letter 186, § 6.
[3] Letter 186, § 9.
[4] Letter 186, § 10.
[5] Letter 186, § 12.

inscrutable, but they are not unjust. For in Augustine's opinion God had a perfect right to select;[1] to remit in one case and not in another. We note here, as constantly during the last period of the Pelagian discussions, that Augustine conceives of God as power rather than as love. But he considers that his teaching is in keeping with the Apostolic maxim,[2] "Whom He wills He pities, and whom He wills He hardens." The right of the potter over the clay appears as the last word, not in a selection to privilege on earth, but to eternal fate hereafter. And the objection is to be silenced with the language of the Apostle, "Who art thou that repliest against God?"[3] Thus no one is justified for his merits, nor hardened without deserving it. And there is no unrighteousness with God.

As for Pelagius himself, Augustine says,[4] that he appears to have pronounced an anathema at the episcopal trial in Palestine against those who held that the sin of Adam only injured himself and not the human race. He also anathematised the assertion that infants dying unbaptised obtained eternal life. He could not escape being condemned unless he had done this. But in that case, what is the inference? Clearly no one is condemned without sin. Clearly also infants have no actual sin of their own. Consequently it must be original sin which is the cause of their exclusion. Grant the premises, and it is all extremely logical.

The propositions which Pelagius was compelled to anathematise in the Council in Palestine[5] included the following:—

> That Adam would have died in any case, whether he sinned or not;
> That Adam's sin injured himself only and not the human race;

[1] Letter 186, § 16.
[2] Letter 186, § 17.
[3] Letter 186, § 20.
[4] Letter 186, § 27.
[5] Letter 186, § 32.

That infants are now born in the same condition as Adam before his fall;
That it is not true that in Adam all die nor that in Christ's Resurrection all rise;
That infants dying unbaptised have eternal life;
That Grace is not given to aid us in separate acts, but consists in free will or instruction or doctrine.
That Grace is given according to merits.

Accordingly those who accept the anathemas of Pelagius[1] are committed to the contraries of their propositions; in other words, to the faith of the Catholic Church. Augustine proceeds, therefore, to formulate the contrary propositions.

But in spite of admissions made before the Palestine Synod,[2] in order to escape being condemned, Pelagius had in subsequent writings spoken in terms which virtually left no room for grace in the Catholic sense of it. He had not hesitated, for instance, to say that we could do by free will what we could do more easily by grace. It was that word "more easily" which Augustine resisted with all his force. To say that we can do right more easily by grace is to say that we can do right without grace: which is absolutely unapostolic.[3] The Apostolic doctrine is, "I, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." The Scriptural principle is, "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it." It is not that it is harder for them to build it, but simply that without grace their efforts to build it are in vain.

So Augustine condenses the whole subject into one of his strongest utterances.

Human nature, even if it had remained in the integrity in which it was created,[4] could no way serve its Creator without His aid. If, then, without the grace of God it

[1] Letter 186, § 33.
[2] Letter 186, § 34.
[3] Letter 186, § 36.
[4] Letter 186, § 37.

could not keep what it had received, how could it without God's grace restore what it had lost?

Augustine supports his own conclusion with a passage borrowed from one of Paulinus's own letters:[1] a passage thoroughly congenial to Augustine's whole mind and experience, expressing the conflicts in human weakness and the powerlessness of unaided beings to achieve their destiny. "I am ashamed to describe what I am. I dare not describe what I am not. I hate what I am, and I am not what I love."

Concerning the origin of the soul Christian thought was greatly exercised at the beginning of the fifth century. Bishop Optatus had been writing letters about it. They were not addressed to Augustine, but he had read them. He sends Bishop Optatus a reply.[2] He is away from Hippo at the Mauritanian city of Cæsarea, whither he has been sent on some mission by Pope Zosimus.

Augustine assures Bishop Optatus that he has never ventured to express a definite decision on the question, whether at every birth a soul is created or is transmitted like the body. After all, if the origin of the soul is unknown, there is no danger so long as redemption is understood. What he knows on Apostolic authority is that in Adam all die, and that no one is delivered except through Christ. Just men were saved before Christ came[3] through their belief in His coming. Thus S. Peter speaking of the yoke "which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear," goes on to say, "but we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they" (Acts xv. 10, 11). The true worshippers of God, whether before the Incarnation, or since the Incarnation, lived or live only by faith in the Incarnation of Christ in Whom is the fullness of grace.[4]

[1] Letter 186, § 40.
[2] Letter 190, A.D. 418.
[3] Letter 190, § 6.
[4] Letter 190, § 8.

Augustine thereupon is led to discuss the doctrine of Predestination:[1] he applies the principle alike to the lost and to the saved.

Then he reaches the problem of the Origin of the Soul.[2] Bishop Optatus had clearly taught the Creationist theory. Augustine asks him how that theory can be reconciled with the need of redemption on the part of infants? If the soul of the infant is newly created, how can it be affected by Original Sin? And if it is not so affected, how can it require to be redeemed? If Optatus can explain this, Augustine would be grateful for the information.

Traducianism is readily reconciled with the doctrine of Original Sin. Creationism is not. That is what Augustine feels. But he will not dogmatise.

What he is certain must be rejected is the opinion of Tertullian,[3] which materialises the soul by regarding it as a product of the body, and makes God the Creator only of the latter.

Elsewhere Augustine says that for Tertullian the incorporeal was the unreal. He was, therefore, compelled to think the soul to be corporeal. Otherwise it seemed to evaporate into nothingness. For the same reason he ascribed body to the Deity, although his acuteness could not fail to see that this involved him in difficulties.[4]

But as to the soul's origin Augustine confesses that he cannot decide.[5] No man should be ashamed to confess his ignorance of what he does not know, lest while he falsely professes knowledge he never deserves to know. When a matter in its very nature difficult surpasses our capacities, and Scripture assists us with nothing plain, it is only presumption if we attempt to define. Nothing conclusive about the origin of the soul[6]

[1] Letter 190, § 9. [2] Letter 190, § 13.
[3] Letter 190, § 14 (*cf.* Tertull. *cont. Praxeam* 7).
[4] *De Genesi ad Litteram* X. 41. Works, III. 437.
[5] Letter 190, § 16. [6] Letter 190, § 17.

can be found in Scripture.[1] When Adam said, "This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," he did not add, "and soul of my soul."

Optatus mentions in his letter a book which he has written on the subject.[2] Augustine would be glad to see it. A very learned man across the sea, he means S. Jerome, referred people to Augustine on this problem. Jerome inclined to the Traducianist theory, and affirmed that the Western Church was accustomed to take that view. This was why Augustine wrote to Jerome.

Augustine is cautious about this book of his.[3] It is the work of an inquirer not of a teacher. He is waiting for Jerome's reply. Meanwhile he will not define anything.

As to Pelagianism, Augustine warns Optatus of its insidiousness. It has been condemned by two occupants of the Apostolic See: Pope Innocent and Pope Zosimus. Augustine quotes the Papal letters. In their words the Catholic faith is plain. No Christian may doubt of it.

But, whether the problem of the soul's origin can be solved or not, what is certain is that it is a creation of God, and that God is not the author of sin, and that the Baptism of Infants is not an empty form.

Certainly also the soul of the Mediator contracted nothing evil by transmission from Adam. Augustine connects this exemption from original sin with the fact of the Virgin Birth. (On the Virgin Birth, see Letter 137 among the letters on Paganism, pp. 55, 56.)

Here then is Augustine's reply. It does not show the knowledge which Optatus desires, but it is prompted by profound regard.

Augustine's vigilance with regard to heretical tendencies was incessant. He seems to know at once where important ecclesiastics begin to vacillate. Sixtus,

[1] Letter 190, § 18.
[2] Letter 190, § 20.
[3] Letter 190, § 21.

priest of the Roman Church, afterwards Pope, is carefully kept in touch by the Bishop of Hippo,[1] who sends him letters by the acolyte Albinus. Bishop Alypius also writes to him. Sixtus also writes to Bishop Aurelius of Carthage by another acolyte named Leo. It is thought that this Leo was no other than Leo the Great, who succeeded Sixtus as Pope in 440. Augustine encourages Sixtus to defend the doctrine of grace against its opponents. But Augustine does not conceal his misgivings. Sixtus has had the reputation of befriending heresy. Augustine would rouse him to alertness. Sixtus should realise that there is a suspicious silence on the part of many persons who cherish the heresy which they dare not utter. They must be instructed. It is impossible to know whether they are recovered unless silence about what is false is converted into open defence of what is true. Sixtus must realise the dangers of this taciturnity.

A far longer letter followed. It extended to forty-seven paragraphs.[2] This letter is sent to Sixtus by Albinus the acolyte, who brought Augustine the letters from Rome. Augustine repeats the unfavourable rumour which has reached him that Sixtus had befriended the enemies of Christian grace. On the other hand, he hears that Sixtus has openly anathematised this heresy, and the Roman priest's letter to Aurelius, although short, was against it. Augustine thankfully recognises that Sixtus's letters now breathe the faith of the Roman Church.

The Bishop then proceeds to strengthen Sixtus by a lengthy reply to Pelagian criticisms on the doctrine of grace.

One criticism against the Augustinian theory of Predestination[3] was that in a case where all were equally at fault, to liberate one and to punish another would be unjust.

[1] Letter 191. [2] Letter 194. [3] Letter 194, § 5.

Augustine's reply is curious. He asks whether it would be unjust to punish all? Let us then whom God has not punished make our thanksgiving.[1] Then Augustine propounds the tremendous proposition that if every man were delivered, the just retribution on sin would not be realised. If no man were delivered the power of grace would not be known.

This proposition the Bishop conceived to be justified by S. Paul's metaphor of the Clay and the Potter. But, like S. Paul, he falls back on the fact of our ignorance. How inscrutable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.[2] Also, he adds, without however reconciling the statement with his proposition, that "all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth."

The Pelagians attempted to solve the problem by asserting that grace is given in response to human merit. But this contradicts S. Paul's challenge: "Who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things" (Rom. xi. 35, 36). It contradicts also the teaching that "we are justified freely by His grace." It contradicts the very conception of grace.[3] For what is grace if it is not freely given, independently of merits, apart from human deservings? If grace is not a gratuitous gift, it is a debt and not grace at all.

Augustine here reminds Sixtus that Pelagius himself was compelled, verbally at least, to anathematise the proposition that grace is the reward of merit, in the Palestinian Synod of Diospolis. Otherwise he could not have escaped condemnation.

The fact is that the Pelagians identify[4] grace with the natural endowments with which we were created. Let that confusion be absolutely repudiated by Christians, says Augustine. For the grace which the Apostle

[1] Letter 194, § 5.
[2] Letter 194, § 6.
[3] Letter 194, § 7.
[4] Letter 194, § 8.

inculcates is not the gift which made us men, but the gift which justified us when we were evil men.

Well, then, say the Pelagians, grace means forgiveness of sins.[1] But forgiveness is preceded by merit. There is the merit of faith. But faith is itself a gift. "According as God hath given to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. xii. 3). If God's works are done by men, they are a product of faith. They cannot be done without it. For all which is not of faith is sin.

Among men who hear the Christian message[2] by no means all have faith. Why one believes and another does not, when both alike hear the same, is among the inscrutable mysteries. What is clear is, that on whom He wills He has mercy. It is inscrutable, but not therefore unjust.

Moreover forgiveness is not enough.[3] The Holy Spirit must inhabit the house which He has cleansed. And that Spirit bloweth where it listeth. Moreover, love towards God is not produced in us by ourselves, but by the Holy Spirit.

The gratuitous character of this gift of faith is shown in Christ's own statement:[4] "No man can come unto Me except the Father Who hath sent Me draw him" (*cf.* John vi. 44 and 65).

It is then impossible to account for any gifts of grace by preceding merit on the part of the recipient.[5] Augustine is never weary of asking, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. iv. 7).

If men say that faith preceded grace, then we must ask what merit preceded the gift of faith?

If men say that prayer preceded grace,[6] and that prayer has merit, then we must reply that our prayer is worthless unless accompanied by the Spirit. "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (Matt. x. 20). Augustine explains that this

[1] Letter 194, § 9.
[2] Letter 194, § 10.
[3] Letter 194, § 11.
[4] Letter 194, § 12.
[5] Letter 194, § 14.
[6] Letter 194, § 16.

does not mean that we do nothing. It expresses the co-operation of the Spirit with our prayers, so that He is said to do what He enables us to do.

Thus there is all the difference between the man in whom[1] the Spirit does not dwell, and the man in whom He does dwell. The former he enables to become faithful, the latter to continue faithful.

Thus there is no merit in man prior to grace. Grace is the creative cause of all human deserving. Accordingly Augustine sums up the doctrine of grace in the celebrated sentence, "When God crowns our merits He will crown nothing else than His own gifts."[2]

Augustine is well aware that in response to all this argument the Pelagian will say:[3] Well, then, if we do ill, it is no fault of ours. For we have not been granted grace.

Augustine cannot tolerate this excuse. We cannot escape responsibility. Men might know much more concerning God than they are inclined to know. S. Paul says that they are without excuse (Rom. i. 20). Men have no ground to say, We have not heard and therefore we have not believed. Ignorance on the part of those who do not desire to know is unquestionably sin:[4] on the part of those who cannot know it is a consequence of sin. Neither have any excuse. Their condemnation is just.

What Sixtus thought of this awful severity we are left to imagine. But when Sixtus is represented as a half-hearted defender of the doctrine of grace[5] we must not forget the form in which Augustine presented that doctrine to him. It is possible to be perfectly orthodox in the Church's doctrine of grace without assenting to the Augustinian deductions.

Augustine proceeds to support his conclusions[6] from the case of infants dying unbaptised. Here he considers

[1] Letter 194, § 18.
[2] Letter 194, § 19.
[3] Letter 194, § 22.
[4] Letter 194, § 27.
[5] *e.g.* by Duchesne.
[6] Letter 194, § 31.

the Pelagian theory of merit is shattered to pieces. There can be no merit in infancy. Now, according to Augustine, the teaching of Scripture and the faith of the Church[1] concur that there is no admission for infants into the Kingdom if they die unbaptised. From this position the great writer saw no possible escape. He descants on the strange anomalies involved. But what it proves to his mind is that God is no accepter of persons, and that grace is not the reward of antecedent merits. He can only repeat once more that God's ways are inscrutable.

Then Augustine identifies selection to privileges on earth (as in the case of Jacob and Esau) with determination of eternal destinies.[2]

The Pelagian solution of this problem was just as desperate.[3] They did not deny the exclusion from Heaven of infants dying unbaptised. But they hazarded the proposition that they were allowed to die and so remain excluded because God foresaw the evil they would commit if He allowed them to live.

To which Augustine made the inevitable retort:[4] Why in that case does not God kill off all infants who are baptised and live to turn out badly?

Augustine's position in the controversy was recognised by the chiefs of the State as well as of the Church.

The Emperors Honorius and Theodosius sent a copy of their decree[5] against Pelagians to Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage, and to Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.

Augustine's letter to the priest Sixtus led to difficulties. It was appreciated by its recipient, but it caused perplexity to others. It happened that Florus, one of the monks of Adrumetum, was on a visit to Uzala, his native place, where Augustine's friend Evodius was Bishop. And there, probably in Evodius's possession, Florus found a copy of Augustine's letter to Sixtus. Florus

[1] Letter 194, § 32.
[2] Letter 194, § 34.
[3] Letter 194, § 41.
[4] Letter 194, § 42.
[5] Letter 201.

transcribed it, and sent his transcription to the Monastery at Adrumetum, where it created much trouble. If Pelagius insisted on human freedom to the exclusion of grace, it was possible on the other side to lay such emphasis on grace that no room was left for the freedom of the human will. This was the conclusion drawn by certain monks at Adrumetum. It seemed to them that the doctrine of grace involved a denial that the will was free. Apparently grace did everything. Man was reduced to a mere instrument under Divine activity. The monks who held this view were in the minority. The majority held that the will was assisted by grace, and distinguished between being assisted and being coerced. But the peace of the Monastery was broken by the difficult propositions contained in Augustine's letter to Sixtus.

News of this dispute in the Monastery of Adrumetum was brought to Augustine by Cresconius and Felix, two monks of that community. His letter to Sixtus had been misunderstood.[1] Augustine, therefore, sent a letter to the Abbot Valentinus and his monks explaining that the true doctrine was neither with those who laid exclusve stress on free will nor with those who laid exclusive stress on grace.

Taking the fact that Christ did not come to condemn the world but to save it (John iii. 17), Augustine asks, "How could the world be saved if there is no such thing as grace?" and "How could it be judged if there is no such thing as free will?"

He explains that his letter to Sixtus, presbyter of the Roman Church, was designed to refute those who assert that grace is given according to human merit. That theory leads a man to glory not in the Lord but in himself. It is most false. Augustine writes with indignant emphasis, with deep conviction.

He would like to send various documents[2] to the Abbot of Adrumetum, but the two monks are in a hurry

[1] Letter 214, A.D. 426.

[2] Letter 214, § 5.

to get home by Easter. They have not brought any letter from their Abbot. But Augustine does not doubt their genuine character, as they are obviously simple-minded persons.

Augustine has ascertained from conversation with them that all the trouble arose from a certain individual in the Community. The Bishop would greatly like to see that man, and presses the Abbot to send him to Hippo. Either the monk does not understand Augustine's book or else is misrepresented by others.

Meanwhile, if men cannot understand the relation of freedom [1] and grace, let them at any rate believe in the existence of both.

It would seem that after all, in spite of their desire to return to Adrumetum for the Easter Festival, the monks were induced to remain at Hippo.[2] For Augustine wrote again to the Abbot Valentinus explaining that he has retained them in order to give them further instruction in the meaning of the Pelagian disputes. He sends them a work on grace and free will, which he has written for their instruction.

The book on Grace and Free Will [3] is an endeavour to set in true proportion human self-determination and Divine aid. Augustine says that he has written much against those who laid the stress so exclusively on the human will that they left no room for Divine co-operation and grace. But in reaction from this exclusiveness some have gone to the opposite extreme. They are defending the doctrine of grace in such a manner as to leave no room for the freedom of the human will. Understanding that this latter extreme exists in the Community (congregation) of Adrumetum, Augustine now proceeds to balance these two aspects of the truth.

It has now become necessary to insist on the reality of free will.[4] This is implied in every Divine command;

[1] Letter 214, § 7.
[2] Letter 215, A.D. 426.
[3] Works, Tom. X. p. 1232.
[4] Letter 215, § 2.

for command would be meaningless if there were no power of choice. Human responsibility is everywhere assumed in Scripture. Augustine collects numerous examples of prohibition. There is a monotonous reiteration of the words "do not do this or that." He gives a whole page of instances.

But the strongest insistence on human independence and self-decision[1] must be balanced by the absolute necessity of Divine Grace.[2] Scripture testimonies to grace are as obvious as those to free will. Self-control, for example, is a gift of God (Wisd. viii. 21). Christ pleads for Peter lest his faith should fail.[3] Pelagius, when residing in the province of Palestine, which contains the city of Jerusalem, dared not tell the Bishop that grace is given according to our merits. For he knew that he could not escape condemnation if he did, that theory being utterly foreign to Catholic doctrine, and hostile to the very nature of the Grace of Christ. Accordingly he anathematised that proposition. Nevertheless he continues to teach it in books which he has written since that Council.[4] Now Christ taught: "No man can come to me except it be given him by my Father" (John vi. 66). S. Paul said he was not worthy to be called an apostle[5] because he persecuted the Church of God. Yet he obtained grace. Not on account of his merits but in spite of them.

And here Augustine repeats his maxim that when He gives a human being eternal life[6] "God crowns His own gifts and not man's merits." Our sufficiency is of God not of ourselves.[7] S Paul said "I obtained mercy that I might be faithful." He did not say "I obtained mercy because I had been faithful." His faithfulness was not the cause of the Divine Mercy but the consequence. He could not have been faithful unless it were for that gift of God. Thus good works are the results of Grace.[8]

[1] Works, Tom. X. p. 1234. [2] *Ib.* p. 1235.
[3] *Ib.* p. 1237. [4] *Ib.* p. 1237. [5] *Ib.* p. 1239.
[6] *Ib.* p. 1241. [7] *Ib.* p. 1242. [8] *Ib.* p. 1243.

Nothing can be more perverse than the Pelagian[1] identification of grace with Divine commands and instructions.[2] Moral law condemns us because it orders us to do what it gives us power to fulfil. This is the constant theme of Augustine's teaching: nowhere brought out more brilliantly than in the great treatise on *The Spirit and the Letter*. He bids the monks of Adrumetum to study Cyprian's book on the Lord's Prayer.[3] No man of course stood higher in African Church esteem.

As usual, there is in this treatise of Augustine a profusion of Scripture references. The profusion of quotation may seem excessive, because bewildering in its multiplicity. Selected passages few and more fully expounded might have been more effective. But the great writer's mind is full, and his knowledge of Scripture very extensive. Old Testament and New alike are laid under contribution. Here is one from Ezekiel.[4] In xviii. 31 we read "make you a new heart and a new spirit." There the stress is on the human will. In xxxvi. 26 we read "a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." There the stress is on the Grace of God. Augustine asks, "Why does He Who says 'make you a new heart' say also 'a new heart will I give you'? Why does He command if He Himself will give? Why does He give if man is to make it for himself?" Augustine answers: "Because God gives what He commands when He enables us to do what He commands us." Thus Grace and Free Will are set in true proportion. The passage is a reminder of the famous saying, "Give what Thou commandest and command what Thou wilt." It is not only a reminder but an expansion and explanation.

But, objected the Pelagian,[5] God would not command what He knew man could not perform. They think

[1] *Ib.* p. 1246. [2] *Ib.* p. 1248. [3] *Ib.* 1249.
[4] *Ib.* p. 1252. [5] *Ib.* p. 1253.

they have said something very convincing here, replies Augustine. But the fact is, God commands what He knows man cannot perform in order to teach us what we are to seek from Him.

All real obedience to God depends on love.[1] And love is a gift from Heaven.

Augustine assures Valentinus and the monks of his Community[2] that a careful study of his book on Grace and Free Will may prevent the rise of further disputes. He sends copies of the letters sent to Pope Innocent of the Provincial Council of Carthage and the Council of the Province of Numidia, and by the five Bishops, as well as the Pope's three replies. Also the letter sent to Pope Zosimus and the Pope's reply to the Bishops of the world. Also there have been decisions passed against Pelagianism in the Plenary Council of all Africa. [This was held at Carthage in 418 under Aurelius of Carthage and included more than 200 Bishops.]

He supports the Catholic doctrine of grace against the Pelagians by appeal to Cyprian on the Lord's Prayer, who explains the petition "Lead us not into temptation" to imply a misgiving of the power of the human will.

On receiving these letters Abbot Valentinus replied[3] to Augustine in profoundly deferential language, which scarcely, however, conceals the Superior's annoyance with his monks. He compares himself to Elijah wrapping his face in his mantle when confronted with the glory of the Lord. He is ashamed of the rusticity of his brethren. He must confess the facts. Brother Felix brought back Augustine's letter to Sixtus and without informing the Abbot had read it to his illiterate companions. Hence all this trouble. The Community was divided, and the Abbot still kept in ignorance, until Brother Florus returned from Carthage and informed the Abbot that he had copied Augustine's letter and

[1] Works, Tom. X. p. 1254 ff.
[2] Letter 215, A.D. 426.
[3] Letter 216.

sent it to the Monastery by Brother Felix. Thereupon the Abbot determined to send to Bishop Evodius asking him to explain Augustine's meaning. The Abbot feels that good will come out of evil, just as the doubts of S. Thomas resulted in the more confirmation of the Church. Valentinus sends the originator of these disputes to Augustine for instruction as the Bishop had requested. He begs the Bishop to pray that the devil may be expelled from the Community.

In his conversations with the misguided monk Augustine ascertained that the controversy in the Monastery of Adrumetum had developed on further lines. When the Brothers who laid exclusive stress on human free will were instructed that their theory must be supplemented by the doctrine of grace, and that it was God that worketh in them both to will and to do; they replied that, if that was the case, it was unreasonable to rebuke and correct those who failed to do right. For their failure is not their fault. It is due to the absence of grace. If God has not yet given the power to obey His commands there is no sense in correcting what is a misfortune but not a sin. All that is reasonable to do for a person so situated is to pray that the grace may be given.

This perverse inference[1] emanating from the Monastery of Adrumetum led Augustine to write them his treatise on *Correction and Grace.*

If it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do,[2] why preach and give instruction? said the independent of Adrumetum. Augustine replied, Men must be shown what the ideal of conduct is.

Well then, said the monk, instruct us by all means. But you have no right to correct us if we fail to comply with instruction. Failure is due to the fact that we have not yet received God's Grace. Pray for us, if you like. But that is all that you can rightly do.[3] Whereto

[1] Works, X. pp. 1281.
[2] *Ib.* p. 1284.
[3] *Ib.* § 7, p. 1285.

Augustine answered, You ought to be corrected for the very reason that you would avoid correction. You prefer your deformity. Correction should drive you to pray for yourself that grace may be given. To allow instruction[1] and refuse correction is illogical. If you refuse the latter you might as reasonably refuse the former also. For since instruction might come direct from God without human intermediary, as it did to S. Paul at his conversion, you might refuse to accept instruction from the Apostle. You might object, He Who instructed *you* directly is able to instruct *us* directly also. We wait for immediate illumination from Heaven. But no Christian will venture on such a demand. And if the believer is willing to receive instruction through men, consistency requires him to be willing also to receive correction through men.[2]

Moreover, asked Augustine, will you really venture to say that you have not received God's Grace? The monk shrank from this Divine challenge. He drew a distinction. I have received faith, he answered, but not perseverance.[3]

That distinction led Augustine off at once into a whole disquisition on the grace to persevere. It led him into an uncompromising insistence on the formidable doctrine of Predestination.

These monks of Adrumetum had probably not the faintest notion what they were bringing on themselves, and indeed upon the theology of the subsequent period, by that plea that they had not received the grace of perseverance.[4] Augustine acknowledged the distinction between grace to begin and grace to persevere. He admitted that it was to his mind an unfathomable mystery that God should give regeneration and faith and love to certain human beings, and yet not give them grace to persevere unto the end. All he can say

[1] Works, X. § 8, p. 1286.
[2] *Ib.* § 8, p. 1286.
[3] *Ib.* p. 1288.
[4] *Ib.* § 18, p. 1294.

is that God's ways are past finding out. There is an undeniable distinction between the called and the chosen. It is a solemn warning against over-confidence and human arrogance. The Psalmist who sang "I said in my prosperity I shall never be moved" was compelled to add :[1]

"Thou didst hide thy face from me and I was troubled." No prudent man who thinks of this will refuse correction.

Then comes again, and yet more uncompromisingly asserted, the tremendous doctrine of Predestination.[2] There is a certain number of souls predestined to the Kingdom of God. That number can be neither diminished nor increased. The strongest use is made here of Scripture passages. Thus the text "Hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown" is represented as implying the existence of a candidate for salvation whose chance depends on another man's failure.

But Augustine is profoundly convinced[3] that there is no room for assurance of our own salvation. The moral is, "Be not high-minded but fear." Who of all the multitudes of believers can affirm, so long as he is in this mortal life, that he is among the number of the predestined: predestined, that is, to life? This insecurity has a real use. It is an incentive to exertion. Augustine even thinks that sons of perdition are permitted to be mingled for a time among those who will persevere in order to deepen the solemn insecurity of redemption.[4]

The practical conclusion is that no sensible man[5] will either utilise the theory of correction as an argument against grace, nor the theory of grace as an argument against correction.

But Augustine cannot allow that the words[6] "Who

[1] Works, X. § 24, p. 1300.
[2] *Ib.* § 39, p. 1311.
[3] *Ib.* § 40, p. 1311.
[4] *Ib.* p. 1312.
[5] *Ib.* § 43, p. 1314.
[6] *Ib.* § 44, p. 1314

will have all men to be saved" mean that all are predestined to eternal life. Here as in many other passages of his writings that great sentence is forced to agree with his theory of Predestination.

Until quite recently this was all that was known about the objections raised to Augustine's doctrine by the monks of Adrumetum. Recently, however, two other letters bearing upon the dispute have been discovered by Dom Morin.[1] We have seen that Abbot Valentinus, being distracted and alarmed by the opposition between his monks and the great leader of African religious thought, sent a despatch to Augustine's friend, Bishop Evodius, to consult him and seek his advice.

Evodius replied in a letter, first published in 1896, in which he insisted that the writings of the doctors of the Church must be read "cum pietate non cum contentione." No one ought to be surprised if there are problems concerning free will, or grace, or the Divine determinations, which he does not understand. Let him believe that God is righteous, and what he cannot understand in the present life let him keep for the next. By all means let the monks read the great teachers of the Church: but when they fail to understand let them not instantly begin to reproach. Let them pray for intelligence. God, says Evodius, gives grace not according to our merits; whom He wills He pities by His goodness; and whom He wills He hardens by a just judgment. It is, adds the writer, beyond human comprehension. Meanwhile it would be presumption and pride for us insignificant individuals to blame the writings of these great men: above all if we are reluctant to accept the teaching of a Plenary Council on the matter. That would be a "temeraria præsumptio"; thinking it knows what it does not, and destitute of humility to learn. Those who refuse

[1] See *Revue Bénédictine*, 1896, pp. 481–486.

submission to the decrees of the Church deserve expulsion and anathema.

This was written in 417. It is not remarkable that it failed to restore the monks to harmony. Abbot Valentinus wrote for help in various directions. Among others he appealed to Januarius, a priest.

Januarius's letter was discovered by Dom Morin and published in 1901. It is a long letter, addressed to Abbot Valentinus, insisting that the servant of God should not strive and must be teachable. Januarius rejects the proposition that it is for man to take the initiative and for God to complete. Scripture declares that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves. Let men learn from the Apostles, and cease to contend. S. Paul ascribes both the beginning and the completion of all good works to God. He Who hath begun a good work in you will perform it.

Those who raise the objection, If all is God's what then is ours? must be answered that we have nothing but falsehood and sin. Hence the insistence on fear and trembling in the injunction to work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you. Januarius is a thorough disciple of Augustine, and echoes Augustine's explanation of the text, "Who will have all men to be saved." It does not really mean "all," but refers only to all those whom He wills to be saved. Whom He wills He hardens. It is the Clay and the Potter.

If the monks are able and willing to receive this, let them receive it. But if they cannot be convinced, let them humbly believe on the authority of Scripture; avoiding contentions, and ceasing to contradict the truth. Otherwise they will imperil their faith. There are many things in the Catholic Faith which must be objects of faith rather than of comprehension. What learned and distinguished Fathers and Doctors of the Church have taught in their writings should be reverently regarded and received. The pious reader will rejoice where he can understand: and where he cannot

understand will not quarrel, but accept provisionally, until such time as God shall grant him understanding.

Januarius then proceeds to give Abbot Valentinus the benefit of his confidential advice. In future the Abbot should be careful to see what books are given to monks of limited intelligence. Their reading ought to be determined in future by the Abbot's authority. Indiscriminate study of a codex or a book by the unqualified is certain to lead to difficulties. Let any of the Community read the Scriptures freely. The caution given applies only to other books.

Januarius has one further piece of advice to give. No casual visitor in future should be allowed to teach the monks. There were too many people about who desired to be teachers of the law, yet neither understand what they say nor whereof they affirm.

What was the sequel at Adrumetum is unknown.

Another letter,[1] addressed to Vitalis of Carthage, contains one of the clearest summaries of Catholic principles concerning the doctrine of grace to be found in Augustine's writings. Vitalis had been teaching that the first beginnings of faith originate in ourselves and are not a gift of God. Augustine contends that this proposition is irreconcilable with the Apostolic teaching, that it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do (Phil. ii. 13). Vitalis understood this to refer to Divine instruction, directing and informing us what we ought to do.

According to this identification of grace with instruction,[2] replies Augustine, we ought not to pray that people may believe the Gospel, but only that they may hear it. But this is contrary to the practice of the Church. You hear God's priest at the Altar ("sacerdotem Dei ad altare") exhorting the people to pray that God would convert to faith those who do not believe.

Pelagianism supposed itself to be defending the free-

[1] Letter 217, A. D. 427. [2] Letter 217, § 2.

dom of the human will.[1] But, says Augustine, we must not support the freedom of the will by opposing the source from which it is made free. It is grace by which we are liberated from the tendency to sin. To oppose grace is therefore to keep the will enslaved. Instead of *liberum arbitrium* we only have *arbitrium captivum*. It is God alone who delivers us from the power of darkness. And he that glories must not glory in man, nor in himself, but in the Lord.

The Mediator enters the strong man's house;[2] that is, the power which holds the human race enslaved, and binds him. But that is a work of grace and not of nature.

Thus the grace of God is not a synonym for free will,[3] or for instruction, "sicut pelagiana perversitas desipit." It is power given to the will for separate acts. "No man cometh unto me, except it is given him by my Father."[4] Thus what we have to pray for is the strengthening of the will, the gift to the unbelieving of power to believe,[5] and of perseverance to those who already believe.

Of course there are problems in the doctrine of grace,[6] some of which Augustine confesses himself unable to solve. Why do some receive grace and persevere for a time and yet live long enough to fall away, when they might have been seemingly removed by an early death before evil had changed them? Let each investigate according to his capacity. If he finds the solution Augustine will hold it with him, provided it does not deviate from the rule of faith. But whatever happens let us hold the Catholic Faith.

Since, then, by the mercy of Christ we are Catholic Christians, says Augustine,[7] we know the following propositions to be true. He proceeds to enumerate twelve in reply to Pelagianism.

[1] Letter 217, § 8.
[2] Letter 217, § 11.
[3] Letter 217, § 12.
[4] Letter 217, § 13.
[5] Letter 217, § 14.
[6] Letter 217, § 15.
[7] Letter 217, § 16.

1. We know that our condition here does not depend on merits acquired in a previous existence, but that the race has contracted the *contagium mortis*, and can only be saved by being born again by grace in Christ.

2. We know that the grace of God is not given, either to infants or to adults, according to merit.

3. We know that grace is given to aid us in individual actions.

4. We know that grace is not given to all; that where it is given it is not given according to the merits or the will of the recipient. Witness the case of infants.

5. We know that grace is given by the gratuitous mercy of God.

6. We know that when grace is withheld, it is withheld by the just judgment of God.

7. We know that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to be judged according to the deeds actually committed in the body, and not according to deeds which we should have committed if our lives had been prolonged.

8. We know that even infants will receive according to what they have done through the body, whether good or evil. But this cannot apply to their personal actions, but to the faith of their sponsors who promised in their behalf, and through whom they are included among the believing. But this must apply, according to Augustine, negatively as well as positively. The unbaptised are the unbelieving. And he that believeth not is condemned.

9. We know that they are happy who die in the Lord.

10. We know that they who sincerely believe in the Lord do so by their own will and free choice.

11. We know that we do rightly to pray for the conversion of those who do not believe.

12. We know that it is right to thank God for those who believe.

If Vitalis assents to these twelve propositions he will be holding the Catholic Faith concerning Grace.

But Augustine feels that his Predestinarianism will present difficulties to his correspondent. There is the text that God will have all men to be saved (1 Tim. ii. 4). Augustine labours to make this agree with the Predestination of the elect alone.[1] He takes the words to mean that all men who are saved are saved because God wills their salvation. Yet, in Augustine's view, God wills that many shall not be saved ("tam multos nolit salvos fieri").

There is very much more in this important letter.[2] The Conversion of S. Paul is appealed to as a supreme example of grace producing faith. Stress is laid on the words "and they glorified God in me." That was the Church's recognition of the power of grace.

Again Augustine insists[3] on the evidence of the Church's prayers for the conversion of the unbelieving. Incidentally he not only speaks of hearing God's priest at His Altar exhorting the people to pray, but speaks of the priest praying audibly ("clara voce orantem") that God would bring the incredulous to believe. Augustine mentions also the response of the people, their Amen to the priest's petitions. The fifth-century Eucharistic Prayers were audible to the congregation.

As the closing years of Augustine's dogmatic activity set in complaints increased concerning his extreme Predestinarian opinions. The opposition came from his own adherents and disciples, who revolted from his later conclusions. The difficulties presented by the Augustinian view were felt profoundly in the Gallican Church and in particular at Marseilles.[4] Two of Augustine's devoted followers, Prosper of Aquitaine and Hilary of Arles, both wrote to Augustine on the difficulties felt by Catholics in his theory of Predestination.

[1] Letter 217.
[2] Letter 217, § 24.
[3] Letter 217, § 26.
[4] Letters 225 and 226.

Prosper told Augustine, deferentially but frankly, that many of the servants of Christ at Marseilles considered that his theory of the purpose of God according to election was contrary to the opinion of the Fathers[1] and the mind of the Church. They were willing to suppose that this criticism of theirs was due to misapprehension on their part rather than to erroneous teaching on his. But they had lately read his work on *Correction and Grace*, and the reading of it only increased their objections.

Here follows a profession of the faith of the Church at Marseilles. They believed that salvation is not by works but by regeneration through the Grace of God. What they could not credit was that any human being exists whom God does not will to save. They maintained, on the contrary, that the propitiation offered by Christ is inclusive of every human being, and that whosoever willed to come to faith and Baptism was capable of being saved. Thus they held that no man need despair of attaining eternal life. The doctrine of arbitrary election or rejection, the destination of one human being to life and another to perdition was, in their opinion, fatal in its moral effects: for it taught that no labour could save the rejected and no indolence exclude the elected. Thus Augustine's theory of Predestination was nothing less than fatalism and necessity. They agreed that no one could enter into the Kingdom of God[2] except by the Sacrament of Regeneration, but they affirmed that if any person was lost, the fault was his own. For God repelled no man from life but desired that all men should be saved and should come to the knowledge of the truth. As to infants who died unbaptised, their theory was that this was to be accounted for by the Divine foreknowledge of the godless lives these children would have led had they been allowed to mature. The essential point with the Church-

[1] Letter 225, § 2 [2] Letter 225.

men of Marseilles was that God places no obstacle in the way of the salvation of any man. They do not believe that the number of the elect can neither be diminished nor increased.

Prosper confesses that he is not able to solve their difficulties. Many of the persons holding these opinions are more spiritual than himself. Some are his ecclesiastical superiors.

Prosper's letter was supported by another from Hilary,[1] much to the same effect; only adding quotations from Augustine's own letter written some twenty years before in reply to Pagan criticism on the Christian Religion (see Letter 102). Augustine had there maintained that Christ willed to appear to men and His doctrine to be proclaimed when and where He knew that men would believe in Him. Elsewhere, again, Augustine had taught that God decreed to give the Holy Spirit to those who, He foresaw, would believe (Exposition of Romans).

Hilary informed Augustine that a quotation which the Bishop had made from the Book of Wisdom was set aside by the Churchmen at Marseilles on the ground that this writing is not among the number of the canonical books.[2]

Augustine was further reminded that in one of his very early writings[3] (that on Free Will) he had expressed himself with caution and uncertainty with regard to the fate of infants. These things could not but have their effect on that considerable element of believers who are led to change their opinions by the authority of distinguished names. Catholics in the Gallican Church were complaining that Augustine had disturbed the peace of the Church. What possible need could exist for unsettling the minds of swarms of simple people by intruding these doubtful disputations. The Catholic Faith had been defended without these theories for

[1] Letter 226. [2] *Ibid.* [3] Letter 226, § 8.

many years, by many writers: in fact, by Augustine himself.

Hilary lays these considerations before the Bishop of Hippo. Hilary is evidently impressed by the extent and the strength of the opposition to Augustine's theories. Augustine will know what is the proper course to take. Meanwhile he asks for some more of Augustine's writings, copies of which have not yet reached him. He is anxious that Augustine should not suppose that he identifies himself with these critics. He is simply a reporter of their criticisms.

The sequel is not to be found among Augustine's letters, but in the Treatises on *The Predestination of the Saints*, and on *The Gift of Perseverance*.

CHAPTER VI

LETTERS ON BIBLICAL EXPOSITION

THE successor to S. Ambrose at Milan was the priest Simplician. Readers of Augustine's *Confessions* will remember that he is mentioned there.[1] Augustine corresponded with him from Africa,[2] and wrote to him in 397, which was the year of Ambrose's death. Simplician was not a man of great learning but of deep spirituality. Simplician sought instruction from Augustine, who wrote a treatise in reply to his questions. And Augustine on his side highly valued Simplician's approval of his works; and even expressed his esteem in terms not a little embarrassing to Simplician's humility: "When what I write pleases you, I know to Whom it is pleasing: for I know Who it is Who dwells within you."

Quite a number of Augustine's correspondents treat him as if he were a man of leisure with no occupation except to answer their inquiries. They did not hesitate to send him strings of questions, any one of which required almost a treatise for an answer.[3] A certain person named Honoratus, not yet baptised, asked Augustine to reply to the following five questions. He wanted to know, first, What was the meaning of the cry from the Cross. Secondly, What S. Paul meant when he wrote "that he being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth and height and depth." Thirdly,

[1] *Confessions*, VIII. 1, 3; cf. *De Civitate Dei*, X. 29.
[2] Letter 37. [3] Letter 140, A.D. 412.

he wanted an explanation of the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. Fourthly, he asked to be told what was meant by the outer darkness. Fifthly, he inquired how are we to understand the text "The Word was made flesh." To these is added a sixth question, What is in the New Testament signified by Grace?

Augustine with exemplary patience replied to all these inquiries, and at very considerable length. His letter became a treatise. Paragraph after paragraph flowed on until the number of sections reached the figure of eighty-five. The letter to Honoratus is a book in itself. It is entitled *On the Grace of the New Testament.*

1. Augustine takes first the question on the prelude to the Gospel of S. John,[1] and gives a lengthy exposition. Incidentally he explains that "born of a woman" does not imply the Virgin Birth. Dwelling on the distinction between S. John Baptist and Christ he sets together Christ's words about him, that he was a burning and a shining light, and the Fourth Evangelist's words, "he was not that light." The Baptist was a *lucerna*, a lamp; but a *lucerna* requires to be kindled and is liable to be extinguished.[2] He was the "lumen illuminatum" to be contrasted with the "lumen verum." The difference between other human beings and Christ as sons of God lies in the term Adoption.[3] We are made by grace what we were not by nature, whereas Christ is essentially and naturally God's Son. What the Fourth Evangelist teaches is the personal Word of God made flesh and dwelling in us. Since the Son of God by participation in the flesh is made Son of Man, faith can credit the proposition that men may by participation in the Word be made sons of God.

We therefore, the changeable, are changed into something higher by the reception of the Word.[4] But the Word, being unchangeable, is not deteriorated by

[1] Letter 140, § 6.
[2] Letter 140, § 8.
[3] Letter 140, § 10.
[4] Letter 140, § 12.

His reception of the flesh and reasonable soul. Yes, He took a reasonable soul as well as a human body. The Apollinarists are mistaken. And, taking human nature, He subjected Himself to human humiliations. And here Augustine warns his reader to realise that the Person Who thus is both God and Man, is one. Otherwise instead of a Trinity you would introduce a Quaternity. But in the Incarnation there is no increase in the number of the Persons. "For just as there is no increase in the number of persons when the flesh is united to the soul to make one man, so neither is the number of persons increased when man is united with the Word, to make one Christ."[1]

2. This leads Augustine to consider[2] the meaning of the cry from the Cross. In a very interesting exposition he reminds Honoratus of a passage in Psalm lxxii., where the singer confesses that problems were insoluble until he went into the Sanctuary of God; that is, until they were viewed under the guidance of the enlightenment bestowed by the Spirit.

This cry of desolation from the Cross—[3] "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—is to be understood as Christ in self-identity with mankind, giving utterance to the Voice of our infirmities. For the old man was crucified together with Him, and He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. It is Christ representing the Church.[4] Just as afterwards He identifies Himself with the suffering inflicted on His Church, when He said: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me?*"

Augustine further claims that the opening words of Psalm xxii., which our Lord uttered upon the Cross, are not to be separated from the whole contents of the Psalm. The Bishop feels that part of the Psalm is literally appropriate to Christ, and part of it is not.[5]

[1] Letter 140, § 12. [2] Letter 140, § 13. [3] Letter 140, § 14.
[4] Hæc ex persona sui corporis Christus dicit, quod est Ecclesia. Letter 140, § 18.
[5] Letter 140, § 31.

Hence he allegorises much, and applies to Christ as representing the Church what seemed to be inappropriate as applied to Christ in person. Thus the verses 25 and 26,[1]

> "My praise is of Thee in the great congregation:
> My vows will I perform in the sight of them that fear Him.
> The poor shall eat and be satisfied:"

is in Augustine's view a reference, first, to the Sacrifice of the Body of Christ in the Sacrament of the Faithful; and secondly, to Eucharist reception.

3. The outer darkness may be understood in two senses.[2] It is the present condition of souls which have not yet received light and grace. But this is a state which may be reversed. Outer darkness may signify also the final exclusion *ubi correctionis locus non erit.* God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness.

4. The passage in Ephesians on the length and breadth and height and depth is mystically explained by Augustine by reference to the dimensions of the Cross.[3]

5. Here follows an exposition[4] of the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. It is an illustration of the changeful human soul which can only find its blessedness in the unchanging good; and which cannot be healed by itself, but only by the unmerited mercy of its Creator. The answer, "Go ye rather to those that sell, and buy for yourselves," is derisive. The lamps lighted signify good works: as when the Lord said "Let your light so shine before men."[5] The lamps gone out signify failure to persevere.[6] The sleep, which wise and foolish alike experienced, is death. The awakening in the night is the Resurrection.

[1] Letter 140, § 61.
[2] Letter 140, § 54.
[3] Letter 140, § 63.
[4] Letter 140, § 74.
[5] Letter 140, § 75.
[6] Letter 140, § 76.

6. To these Augustine himself adds finally the question concerning the Grace of the New Testament. It is that which comes to us through the Incarnation and gives us power to become sons of God. He would wish to say much on this. For this Grace has its opponents, who desire to ascribe their goodness to themselves and not to God.[1] Augustine mentions no names. But he acknowledges the excellence of the people who oppose the doctrine of Grace. They are not persons whom you will easily despise. They live a life of self-restraint. They are praiseworthy for their good works. They are orthodox on the doctrine of the Godhead: quite unlike the Manichæans. But they are ignorant of the Divine righteousness, and they seek to establish their own. They are foolish virgins. They do not carry the knowledge of the Grace of God in their hearts. They do not know Whose gift their self-restraint really is. They do not give thanks for it. Their foolish heart is darkened. But they are by no means to be despaired of so long as their life may last.

Paulinus, Bishop of Nola,[2] asked a series of questions on Biblical exposition. In this case both sides of the correspondence are preserved. The questions are partly on passages in the Psalms. (1) For instance, the passage which is rendered in our Authorised Version,

> "Slay them not, lest my people forget it;
> But scatter them abroad among the people, and put them down, O Lord our defence,"

is regarded by Paulinus as addressed by Jesus Christ to the Father in reference to the Jews. Paulinus saw the fulfilment of the passage in the dispersion of the Jews, without temple and without sacrifice, among all the nations of the earth. But he has misgivings about the text, for his Version reads:

> "Slay them not lest they should forget Thy law."

[1] Letter 140, § 83. [2] Letter 121.

And this seems to him unintelligible. (2) Paulinus also desired Augustine to define the difference between Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, mentioned in Eph. iv. 11 (p. 533). (3) Also to be told the difference between the prayers called intercessions in 1 Tim. ii. 1, and other kinds of prayer (p. 534). (4) Also to know the meaning of the difficult passage in Col. ii. 18, about voluntary humility and worshipping of angels (p. 535). (5) Also concerning the words of Simeon to the Blessed Virgin Mary: "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thought of many hearts may be revealed." Did this refer to Mary's maternal grief when she saw the Crucifixion?

These were among the questions which the Bishop of Nola propounded to Augustine. Paulinus's letter is believed to have been written about A.D. 410. Augustine's reply is dated apparently four years later, if the Benedictine editors are right.[1] Augustine's letters familiarise us with late arrivals, with missing documents, and interrupted correspondence. But this is one of the worst examples.

Augustine replies to the whole number of Paulinus's inquiries. We follow here only the selected instances. He calls Paulinus his fellow-bishop, describes another of the clergy as his fellow-presbyter, and yet another as his fellow-deacon.

1. The passage in the Psalms, "Slay them not, lest they forget Thy law," Augustine understands as a prediction that the Jews when conquered and dispersed would continue in their ancient law, so that the witness of the Scripture should remain among them everywhere in the world. Elsewhere Augustine calls the Jews the librarians of the Church; as retaining the books which the Church alone fulfils.

2. On the list of ministries in Eph. iv., Augustine

[1] Letter 149.

thinks that Pastors and Teachers do not denote different offices, but are synonymous.

3. He has much to say on the different kinds of prayer, especially as intercessions. He notes that the Greek word ἐντεύξεις, which we translate intercessions, is variously rendered in the Latin version by *interpellare* or *postulare*. Our Lord makes intercession for us (Rom. viii. 34). Augustine understood this to mean making requests to the Father.

S. Paul's order is supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings. Augustine thinks that "supplications" is the right name for those prayers which precede the Consecration in the Eucharist; while "the prayers" is the right name when the Consecration is effected and the distribution takes place. That this is the right meaning of the term "prayers" is, he thinks, implied in the Greek word used. For the word προσευχή denotes a vow or dedication. Now all things offered to God are dedicated to Him, above all the Oblation of the Holy Altar. In that sacrament our self-dedication is proclaimed, when we vow to remain in Christ, that is in the bond of the Body of Christ. The Eucharist is the Sacrament of the Union. For the Bread is One, and we being many are one Body.[1]

Then the interpolations or intercessions or requests are made when the people are blessed. For then the priests act as advocates.

Finally the thanksgivings are the prayers which follow when the Sacrament has been received.

4. Then as to the different passages in Colossians on voluntary humility. Augustine illustrates the term from a number of popular Latin expressions. A person who aims at being considered wealthy is called *thelodives;* one whose ambition is to be reputed wise is called *thelosapiens*. According to these analogies, a person of voluntary humility or *thelohumilis*,[2] is the

[1] Letter 149, § 16. [2] Letter 149, § 27.

person who simulates humility, who desires to be regarded as humble-minded. There is in the term the notion of unreality and pretentiousness.

5. On the words of Simeon to Mary, Augustine agrees with Paulinus, and encloses another letter which he had written on the subject, but which unhappily has not survived. But the phrase that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed, means that by the Passion of our Lord both the motives of the Jews and the weakness of the Apostles would be brought to light.

Evodius was one of Augustine's intimate friends. They grew up together at Thagaste. Evodius became a convert and was baptised at an earlier date than Augustine. The two were together in the villa outside Milan.[1] Both started on the return journey to Africa, and Evodius was present at Ostia when Monica died. It was Evodius who took the Psalter in the house of mourning, while all responded :[2]

> "My song shall be of mercy and judgment :
> Unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing."[3]

Back in Africa, Evodius was ordained and became a bishop. His See was Uzala. The two friends kept up a correspondence, of which part survives. But many years had elapsed. It was now the year 414.

Bishop Evodius tells his friend Augustine about the death of a young private secretary, a deeply religious youth, a son of a certain priest ;[4] how he died just after signing himself with the sign of the Cross ; how they held memorial services for three days at the grave, and on the third day offered the Sacrament of Redemption. Evodius then relates various dreams of devout persons concerning the welfare of the departed.

These incidents raised various problems in the writer's

[1] *Confessions*, IX. 17.
[2] Psalm ci.
[3] *Confessions*, IX. 31.
[4] Letter 158, A.D. 414.

mind.[1] He wants to know whether the soul when it leaves the earthly body continues in a disembodied state until the Resurrection, or is meanwhile clothed with a body of some kind. He seems to think that a disembodied soul could not retain its individuality. If the soul resides in some distinct locality, such as Abraham's bosom, it must be embodied.[2] He wants to know why the soul separated from the earthly solid frame should not possess a body of its own.

Evodius had read in an apocryphal book called the *Mysteries of Moses*, to which however he assigns no authority, that when the Lawgiver ascended the Mount to die, his body was committed to the earth but another body was granted him. Evodius considers that this idea is confirmed by the visible appearance of Moses at the Transfiguration. The future Resurrection of the body does not exclude the possibility of some intermediate body. But what the soul's condition is Evodius desires to be instructed.[3] What he revolts against is the notion that death is a dreamless sleep.

Pursuing the subject further, Evodius asks whether, if the soul possesses after death and before Resurrection a body such as he imagines, that body possesses the same senses as we have here. Evodius is willing to part with all except hearing and sight.

He thinks that to exist apart from body of some kind[4] is a Divine prerogative which cannot be shared by men.

To these inquiries of his "beloved brother and sharer in the priestly office," Augustine replied[5] that he sees no reason to believe that the soul departing from this earthly body receives another body in the other world before the Resurrection.

As to the visions of the departed or the absent Augustine is sure that they are independent of any

[1] Letter 158, §§ 4 and 5.
[2] Letter 158, § 6.
[3] Letter 158, § 7.
[4] Letter 158, § 11.
[5] Letter 159, A.D. 415.

embodied manifestation of the object seen.[1] Thus Augustine while writing to Evodius contemplates in mental vision a very definite image of his friend which, however, is not created by Evodius's presence, and of which Evodius is not even aware. This would apply to visions of the departed. Augustine here refers his correspondent to his books on Genesis where this subject is carefully considered.

In the present reply to Evodius, Augustine adds an example to illustrate the facts of mental vision apart from the physical vision through the senses of the body.[2] There was a well-known physician named Gennadius, formerly resident in Rome, and now in Carthage, who in early life had doubted the soul's survival of physical death. But one night he had a vision in which a stranger led him where he saw the heavenly city and heard the hymn of the blessed. He awoke, and regarded it only as a dream.[3] But another night he saw his heavenly guide again. He was conscious that his bodily eyes were closed in sleep. And yet he saw the heavenly vision. He was accordingly taught that when the bodily eyes shall be dispensed with after death, the power of mental vision still remains.

Evodius wrote again to Augustine.[4] His mind is much exercised on the relation between Reason and God. Reason declares that God ought to exist. Similarly Reason declares that the world must exist. Reason therefore is prior to the world. Reason thus appears as an abstraction which is followed by the actualisation of what it postulates. Evodius is therefore puzzled to know whether Reason is prior to Deity. God would not exist unless Reason existed which taught that God ought to be. Neither would Reason exist unless God existed. God cannot be without Reason nor Reason without God.

[1] Letter 159, § 2.
[2] Letter 159, § 3.
[3] Letter 159, § 4.
[4] Letter 160, A.D. 414.

Here is Evodius's perplexity, which without more ado he leaves Augustine to solve.

Apparently without waiting for a reply, Evodius wrote again.[1] He has been reading some letters which Augustine had written to Volusian (Letter 137), and to a lady named Italica (Letter 92). The letter to Italica was written about A.D. 408. That to Volusian in 412. It was now A.D. 414. Volusian had been perplexed about the Incarnation, and about the Virgin Birth. In the course of his reply Augustine had written the sentence, "If an explanation is sought, there will be no miracle; if an example is demanded, there will be no uniqueness." Evodius does not see the reason of this remark. He thinks it will still be miraculous if a reason has been sought, and if an example is demanded; it will still be unique. He means that an illustration will not be exactly parallel with that which it illustrates. He gives examples of parthenogenesis in the inferior orders of creation. He thinks that Augustine's assertion may rather hinder than help the inquirer about the Faith.

To these criticisms Augustine sent a reply[2] with a sense of grave responsibility. For his letter will not only be read by intelligent friends like Evodius, but also by less educated people, and by unfriendly critics. What care such conditions demand! Now he is already fully occupied with other literary labours. Are these to be put aside in favour of the newly arrived letter? If so, is the newcomer in its turn to be set aside in favour of some still later arrival?

Many of Evodius's questions are already answered in works which Augustine has written, but not yet published, whether on the Trinity or on Genesis. Augustine also reminds Evodius of their discussions, doubtless those held in the villa outside Milan, on the quantity of the Soul, and the Freedom of the Will:

[1] Letter 161, A.D. 414. [2] Letter 161, A.D. 415.

discussions embodied in Augustine's earlier works. Then, again, Evodius has the book on *True Religion*. If Evodius will read that book and reflect upon it, he will certainly not regard Reason as prior to Deity.

Evodius can hardly have forgotten his discussions with Augustine outside Milan in which he took so important a part. The whole book on *The Freedom of the Will* is nothing else than a dialogue between Evodius and Augustine.

The substance of this dialogue dates from many years before. It was held in 388. In the course of it there is a discussion on the grounds of belief in the existence of God.[1] All being is classified in an ascending scale of value: that which exists, that which lives, and that which has intelligence. Augustine asks Evodius in the dialogue whether he will give the name of God to that which is superior to our intelligence. Evodius replies that God must be not only that which is superior to our intelligence, but that which has no superior to itself[2] (quo nihil superius esse constiterit). The reader will be reminded of S. Anselm's definition: God is that than which no greater can be conceived.[3]

Augustine proceeds by inquiring whether there is any object of thought which is not the exclusive possession of this or that individual mind, but the common property of all minds alike: or whether there is such a thing as objective truth. Evodius replies that undoubtedly there is:[4] and he gives arithmetical numbers as an illustration. The truths of mathematics are the same for every mind. They cannot be other than they are. Seven plus three are ten. Under no circumstances, nowhere, at no time, can this be otherwise. It is an immutable, incorruptible truth.

Augustine then asks whether the existence of objective[5] truth holds good in the moral and spiritual

[1] *De Libero Arbitrio*, II. 11, p. 961. [2] *Ibid.* 14, p. 964.
[3] "Id quo majus cogitari nequit," *Proslogion*, ii.
[4] *De Libero Arbitrio*, § 20, p. 967. [5] *Ibid.* § 25, p. 970.

spheres. Is there such a thing as Wisdom? Or does every individual have a wisdom of his own? Evodius is perplexed. The ideals of individual men, their conception of the highest good, differ enormously. It looks as if the whole thing were reduced, as we say, to opinion and subjectivity. But, replies Augustine, whatever individuals pursue they do so under the impression that it is good. Thus if they differ in their idea of what is good, they agree in their idea that such a thing as good exists. If they differ about the means they agree about the end.[1] All men aspire to happiness even if they dispute wherein that happiness consists. Now this idea is not the property of the individual but is common to all. Moreover there are things objectively true in the moral sphere. It is always true that inferior things are to be subordinated to better; that the eternal is better than the temporal; that the mind must be raised to things incorruptible. These are unchanging truths. The principles of wisdom are everywhere the same. We do not say that they ought to be.[2] We simply say that they are. Seven plus three are ten. We cannot say that they ought to be.

Now this immutable truth is greater than the human mind. For we cannot correct it nor alter it. And what else is this objective Truth and Wisdom if it is not God? It is what all can embrace and share. It is the inspirer of every individual. It transcends the individual and can become the common possession of the whole race. This objective, unchanging truth is the light of all our seeing.[3] If there is anything in existence more excellent than this, that more excellent thing is God. If there is nothing more excellent than Truth then Truth is God.

If Evodius turned to the treatise on Free Will to which Augustine referred him in his letter, this is the

[1] *De Libero Arbitrio*, II. § 28, p. 973. [2] *Ibid.* § 34, p. 977.
[3] *Ibid.* § 39, p. 981.

substance of the answer given there. Augustine here contents himself with repeating the statement that we do not say that seven plus three ought to be ten, but simply that they are. Reason does not create God, but only discovers Him.

It is not quite so easy to see why Augustine also referred Evodius to the book on *True Religion*.[1]

As to the criticism which Evodius had sent to Augustine's remarks on visions, Augustine invites his critics to reconsider the original letter. When the spirit leaves the body in death it neither takes the eyes of the body with it nor a body constructed out of the earthly body. It still possesses the power of sight, but the sight is not physical.[2]

Then with regard to Augustine's former statement on the Virgin Birth in the letter to Volusian: "If an example is demanded, there will be no uniqueness." Evodius had criticised this on the ground that instances of parthenogenesis could be found in the inferior orders of Creation. Augustine replies that Christ alone is Virgin-born: meaning apparently that there is no parallel within the experience of the human race.[3] Then again with regard to Augustine's statement that "if an explanation is sought there will be no miracle," the writer now adds that everything has its cause. But when the cause is unknown to us, and the reason of a thing is concealed, we call it miracle. The Virgin Birth is a miracle not because it has no explanation but because the explanation is concealed from us.

Augustine assures Evodius that a man of his insight requires no more than these hints. The letter has already reached a length which suggests that the writer has forgotten his other occupations. Meanwhile will Evodius send another copy of a previous letter which cannot be answered because it has been mislaid.

[1] Letter 162, § 3.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Letter 162, § 7.

Evodius wrote again.[1] He desired an explanation of the passage in 1 Pet. iii. 18–21, on Christ preaching to the spirits in prison.

Augustine sent a long and elaborate reply.[2] Here, as constantly, the great writer confesses his own uncertainty. He is himself in much perplexity on the subject. He would be glad to be instructed. His difficulty is this.[3] If Christ after His Passion went and preached to spirits in Hell, why were the unbelieving of the age of Noah the only objects of His Mercy?

That our Lord descended into hell (*apud inferos*) Augustine thinks no one but an infidel will deny.[4]

As to the souls who were delivered, Augustine would rejoice to think that[5] Christ emptied hell and that all without exception were delivered. He thinks sympathetically of the great Pagan poets and literary men, praiseworthy in their lives, noble in many moral ways, faithful in life and true in death, always excepting the falsity of their religion. Augustine is torn between conflicting thoughts. His heart goes one way. His theory of predestination another. He would desire to see them "free from the powers of hell, were not the verdict of human feeling different from that of the justice of the Creator."

Was it, then, not all, but only some of the souls in hell that Christ delivered?

Augustine says[6] that according to the almost unanimous tradition of the Church it was believed that Adam was delivered. This tradition had great authority although it could not be supported from any definite Scripture statement.

"But seeing that plain scriptural testimonies make mention[7] of hell and its pains, no reason can be alleged for believing that He Who is the Saviour went thither, except that He might save from its pains; but

[1] Letter 163, A.D. 414. [2] Letter 164, A.D. 414.
[3] Letter 164, § 2. [4] Letter 164, § 3. [5] Letter 164, § 4.
[6] Letter 164, § 3. [7] Letter 164, § 8.

whether He did save all whom He found held in them, or some whom He judged worthy of the favour, I still ask: that He was, however, in hell, and that He conferred this benefit on persons subjected to those pains, I do not doubt. Wherefore, I have not yet found what benefit He, when He descended into hell, conferred upon those righteous ones who were in Abraham's bosom, from whom I see that, so far as regarded the beatific presence of His Godhead, He never withdrew Himself; since even on that very day on which He died, He promised that the thief should be with Him in Paradise at the time when He was about to descend to loose the pains of hell. Most certainly, therefore, He was, before that time, both in Paradise and in the bosom of Abraham in His beatific Wisdom, and in hell in His condemning power; for since the Godhead is confined by no limits, where is He not present? At the same time, however, so far as regarded the created nature, in assuming which at a certain point of time, He, while continuing to be God, became man, that is to say, so far as regarded His soul, He was in hell: this is plainly declared in those words of Scripture, which were both sent before in prophecy and fully expounded by apostolical interpretation: 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.'"[1]

Augustine's critical mind saw further problems in the exposition of this passage in S. Peter.[2] Some interpreters held that the persons delivered by our Lord's preaching in Hades were those who had never heard the Gospel on earth, and had never been granted an opportunity to believe. Well then, said Augustine, the same plea is available for those who since Christ's Resurrection died without even hearing the Gospel preached.[3] But Augustine was unable to accept this plea for their inclusion within Redemption. His arguments are: First that the possibility of redemption in the other world

[1] Letter 164, § 8. [2] Letter 164, § 12. [3] Letter 164, § 13.

would lead to indifference to conversion here on earth. And secondly, that it would be a reason against preaching the Gospel to the Pagan world.

On these grounds Augustine propounds another interpretation.[1] The spirits in prison may denote the unbelieving here on earth. Christ's going to preach to them may refer to His appeals prior to His incarnation.[2] Thus in the time of Noah Christ did virtually preach to the souls in prison, *i.e.* send His warnings to the unconverted here on earth.[3] He came to them in the Spirit although not in the flesh.

Augustine throws this out as possible.[4] If this exposition does not satisfy, let the reader apply the passage to an actual preaching of Christ to spirits in hell. Only let him try to solve Augustine's difficulties.

As for the problem of visions of God by the bodily senses, it must be deferred for a lengthier discussion.

One of Augustine's correspondents, Dardanus, a high official in Gaul, was much exercised in understanding the word from the Cross: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."[5] If Christ said He would be in Paradise, how can we believe that He is in Heaven? Does it mean that Paradise is a part of Heaven? Or is it a reference to God's ubiquity?

To this the Bishop replied in his book on the Presence of God.

Augustine in reply distinguishes. Christ is either speaking as Man or else as God.[6] If the former, Paradise is not to be regarded as part of Heaven, for the soul of Christ went down to the lower world (*inferno*). Paradise, therefore, is situated in the lower world, to which Christ went in order to deliver those who ought to be delivered. In the lower world Christ did not only visit the penal part but also those who were in

[1] Letter 164, § 15.
[2] Letter 164, § 16.
[3] Letter 164, § 17.
[4] Letter 164, § 22.
[5] Letter 187, to Dardanus, A.D. 417.
[6] Letter 187, § 5.

Abraham's bosom. It seems to Augustine probable that Abraham's bosom is a synonym for Paradise.[1]

If, however, Christ is here speaking as God the meaning is simpler. For Christ as God is everywhere. Thus He is present with the blessed wherever they may be.[2]

But the Man Christ Jesus is now in Heaven.[3] His human nature does not possess ubiquity. In His humanity He is not everywhere diffused. Care must be taken while insisting on His Divinity not to detract from the truth of His humanity. ("Cavendum est enim ne ita divinitatem astruamus hominis, ut veritatem corporis auferamus.")

Augustine also points out the danger of misconceiving the omnipresence or ubiquity of God. God is, we say, everywhere diffused. He fills Heaven and earth. But this universal presence must not be understood in a material sense. It is not a case of extension through space. We cannot say that God is partly present in one place and partly in another, like a material substance. But He is wholly present wherever He is present. Present in His whole being,[4] whether in earth or in Heaven (*in seipso ubique totus*).

Nevertheless this universal presence of God is different from His indwelling in human souls. For He does not dwell in all. He is everywhere, by the presence of His Divinity, but not by the grace of indwelling.[5] And as God does not dwell in all, neither does He dwell equally in all in whom He dwells.[6] There are degrees of Divine indwelling in the human soul.

This Divine indwelling may begin in infancy.[7] Thus we say that the Holy Spirit dwells in baptised infants although they are unconscious of the fact. God is said to dwell in them because He is influencing them within,[8] to make them His temples. And this rebirth of water

[1] Letter 187, § 6. [2] Letter 187, § 7. [3] Letter 187, § 10.
[4] Letter 187, § 14. [5] Letter 187, § 16. [6] Letter 187, § 17
[7] Letter 187, § 26. [8] Letter 187, § 27.

and of the Spirit confers upon the baptised the forgiveness of all sins. It is the Sacrament of our Regeneration.

Among expressions to notice in this letter are that the Eucharist is called a sacrifice and reference is made to the Liturgy (§ 21). The Rule of Faith is also mentioned as that to which all within the Church must adhere (§ 29). And Baptism is called the Sacrament of our Regeneration (§ 30).

One of Augustine's correspondents wrote him a letter [1] concerning the end of the world. The writer maintained that while it was not possible to determine the day and the hour, there were, nevertheless, certain signs by which it would be possible to recognise when the end was near. The writer had been meditating on Jerusalem being trodden down by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. He had thought on the signs in the sun and the moon and the stars, and on the earth distress of nations, and men's hearts failing them for fear. There had been some alarming incidents in the course of nature. He had been reading also Jerome's exposition of the words in Daniel, and was perplexed by the abomination of desolation. So he confides in Augustine what he thinks, hoping to hear some instruction in reply.

Augustine's replies give the impression of a man already absorbed in studies, breaking off from his labours to answer an inquirer out of the fullness of his mind. And as he answers, thoughts crowd in upon him. Precedents, authorities, scripture expositions, one after another are poured out from an apparently inexhaustible treasury of resources, until the fountain became a river and the river became a sea.

In the present case there issues a masterly treatise,[2] of more than fifty sections, on the end of the world.

Augustine begins by commending the zeal with which

[1] Letter 198. [2] Letter 199.

his correspondent writes on the Advent of Christ; dwells on the danger of reliance on the thought that the Lord delays His coming; points out the true religious attitude of desire to appear before the presence of God; and emphasises our ignorance of the times, as an incentive to watchfulness. For the individual human being the end of the world is the day when he dies. If Christ said that it was not for His Apostles to know the date of the last day, it would be presumption on our part to define it.

Augustine's correspondent had referred to the passages in Daniel[1] about the Son of Man coming with the clouds of Heaven. Augustine requests him to explain in unambiguous language precisely what this means, and how it can be reconciled with our Lord's own declaration that it is not for us to know the times or the seasons. Appeal is made to S. Paul's discouragement[2] of expectations of a speedy return of Christ. The Gospel words, "of that day and that hour knoweth no man," must not be understood to imply the possibility of knowing the year or the decade or the century, as Augustine imagined his correspondent to suppose.[3] A thousand years are to God as a single day.[4] The language of Daniel cannot contradict the warning of Christ about our ignorance of the final day.[5] It was disputed whether the words in Daniel refer to Christ's first coming or to His second or to both.[6] Undoubtedly every day brings us nearer to His coming.[7] But what the interval is it is not for us to know. S. Paul said the night is departing, the day is at hand. And yet how many years have elapsed! Nevertheless what he said is true.

There is again much to reflect on in the expression "the last days." "In the last days grievous times

[1] Letter 199, § 13.
[2] Letter 199, § 15.
[3] Letter 199, § 16.
[4] Letter 199, § 17.
[5] Letter 199, § 19.
[6] Letter 199, § 21.
[7] Letter 199, § 22.

shall come" (2 Tim. iii. 1). "In the last days I will pour forth of my Spirit" (Acts ii. 17). That phrase, "last days," appears to haunt the writer.[1] If the period of Whitsuntide was the "last days" what are we to say of the present? The *novissima hora* advances until the days come which will be *novissimorum novissimi.*

There is the coming of Christ through the Church in which He never ceases coming until the end.[2]

Augustine is clear that much of the Evangelist's description of the last days[3] refers to the fall of Jerusalem and not to the end of the world. The abomination of desolation refers to the former not to the latter. The shortenings of the days refers to the calamities at Jerusalem.

But here Augustine insists that passages on the end of the world are open to an allegorical rather than a literal interpretation.[4] "He that is on the housetop let him not descend into his house" may well be understood as a warning against returning from a spiritual to a carnal manner of life. And the reference to the sun being darkened was never more truly fulfilled than when the Light of the World was hanging from the Tree.[5]

Augustine's correspondent held that the end of the world[6] must be near because the signs were being fulfilled. Men's hearts were failing them for fear, and in anticipation of things which were coming on the earth. For no single portion of the earth was free from affliction and tribulation. Augustine is not convinced by this. For did not S. Paul teach that when they are saying "Peace and safety then sudden destruction cometh"? (1 Tim. v. 3). It is questionable, therefore, whether the tribulation mentioned does not mean experience in store for the Church rather than the world. It may be that precisely when the world is in a state of peace and security that the sudden

[1] Letter 199, § 24.
[2] Letter 199, § 25.
[3] Letter 199, §§ 28 and 29.
[4] Letter 199, § 32.
[5] Letter 199, § 34.
[6] Letter 199, § 36.

destruction may come upon it. But at the time at which Augustine was writing both Church and World were suffering tribulation and nowhere could any one speak of peace and security.

The time when the sun shall not give its light is allegorically the time when the Church's influence shall not be felt; and the stars will fall from heaven when those who shone in moral excellence collapse and fail in time of trial and temptation, in times when the strongest of the faithful will be shaken.[1]

The end must be not when a selection only of these indications is accomplished,[2] but when the entire series is complete. Meanwhile Christ is perpetually coming in His Church.

Moreover the end will be when the Gospel has been universally proclaimed.[3] Augustine's correspondent supposes that this had already happened in the Apostolic age. Augustine cannot think this opinion correct. There are many African peoples who have not yet heard of the Christian Faith.[4] Now it is not only the Roman Empire but all nations to whom the Gospel is to be preached. The dominion of Christ is to extend from sea to sea and from the river unto the world's end (Ps. lxxii. 8). "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship Thee, O Lord" (Ps. lxxxvi. 9).

The words, "Ye shall be my witnesses . . . unto the ends of the earth," no more apply to the Apostles only than the words, "I am with you always unto the end of the world." Both utterances apply to the Church.[5]

Thus, says Augustine, drawing his lengthy disquisition to a close,[6] I have told you what I think. Error is to be avoided so far as human power permits. What is certain is that whether it be soon or late our Lord will come. Meanwhile no man is in error so long as he is aware of his ignorance, but only while he thinks he

[1] Letter 199, § 39.
[2] Letter 199, § 45.
[3] Letter 199, § 46.
[4] Letter 199, § 47.
[5] Letter 199, § 49.
[6] Letter 199, § 52.

knows what he does not. On the subject of the Advent of Christ, the real evil is where men act irreligiously on the ground that the Lord delays His coming. Setting that instance of the bad servant aside, Augustine says that the good servants who look for their Lord's coming watchfully are of three kinds. One believes that our Lord will come soon. A second that His coming will not be yet. The third confesses his ignorance. All these are consistent with belief. For all alike love His coming. The first says, Let us watch and pray for His coming will be soon.[1] The second, Let us watch and pray, for even if His coming be delayed, our life is short and insecure. The third says, Let us watch and pray, for life is short and uncertain and we know not when the Lord will come. Now, since the Gospel says, "Watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is" (Mark xiii. 33), what else does this third maintain than precisely what the Gospel teaches? The only difference between the first kind and the last is, that the last admits that he does not know. If the first is right, the others will rejoice. If the second, then there is the risk that those who believed the first may lose heart on finding that it is not true, and so cease to believe in the Advent altogether. Thus the first holds the more desirable belief, the second holds the more safe, and the third combines the more desirable with the more safe, for he goes astray with neither of them, since he neither affirms nor denies.

In an important letter to Consentius,[2] Augustine discusses the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body. Consentius asked whether the Lord's Body now possesses bones and blood and the lineaments of the flesh. Augustine replies that he believes the Lord's Body to be now in heaven as it was on earth at the time of the Ascension. He assumes that the Resurrection appearances of Christ to the disciples represent exactly the Resurrection state. He quotes the Lucan report: "Flesh and bones

[1] Letter 199, § 53. [2] Letter 205, A.D. 420.

as ye see me have." And the passage: "Shall so come as ye have seen Him go." Thus Christ's Body in heaven is as it was in the appearances during the great Forty Days.

At the same time this substantial identity and identity in appearance is consistent with considerable change. The Divine power can remove from the nature of the body what qualities He pleases and add others. Thus the necessity of food and hunger will disappear, but the power of taking food will remain. Corruptibility will vanish, but the physical features will remain.

As to the text, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God," Augustine does not interpret the words as a reference to works of the flesh. For moral problems are not the subject with which the Apostle is dealing. It means the corruption of the flesh.

When S. Paul says, "Thou sowest not that body which shall be," he does not mean to deny substantial identity between the present body and that of the Resurrection. Wheat is always the product of wheat. What he means is, that if God adds to the bare grain that which was not previously in it, much more can He restore that which was in the body of man.[1]

Augustine is quite clear that a spiritual body does not mean a body transmuted into spirit.[2] Man, who consists of body and spirit, will not become all spirit. The Apostle did not say, It is sown a body, it is raised a spirit. He said, It is sown an animal body, it is raised a spiritual body.

Now as the animal body is not soul but body, so the spiritual body is not spirit but body. The Resurrection Body of Christ was certainly a spiritual body. But it was body not spirit. Witness the invitation, "Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." The flesh of Christ was already a spiritual body. But it was not spirit: it was body.[3]

[1] Letter 205, § 6. [2] Letter 205, § 10. [3] *Ibid.*

When S. Paul says that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God," he means that the corruption of mortality cannot be transferred to the future life.[1]

Thus it can be said that the flesh can inherit the Kingdom of Heaven and that flesh cannot inherit.[2] The one assertion is true in the sense of substance, the other in the sense of corruption.

It appears that thoughtful minds were being greatly exercised on the difficulty of reconciling[3] Christian morals with ordinary social and political standards of life. Men were asking then, as since, how is it possible to reconcile the Christian ideal of patient endurance with the political ideal of retaliation. Augustine suggests that the Pagan ideals commended a willingness on the part of statesmen to overlook an injury; that a State is by its very constitution a multitude of individuals united in mutual concord;[4] that the intention in patiently submitting to the loss of worldly advantage is to show the superiority of faith and righteousness, thereby appealing to the offender's better nature, and overcoming evil with good. Augustine points out that the precept on submission to violence[5] is intended to suggest what is the right inward spirit rather than what is the appropriate outward action. For Christ Himself when smitten did not turn the other cheek to the smiter, but expostulated with the aggressor's injustice. Thus in this instance our Lord did not fulfil the letter of His own precept. But the spirit which guided Him is revealed in the prayer on the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Neither did S. Paul obey the letter of Christ's precept when struck by an attendant in the high priest's court. Augustine did not consider that there was anything inconsistent with the

[1] Letter 205, § 13. [2] Letter 205, § 16.
[3] Letter 138. For the earlier part of this letter see chapter on the Eucharist.
[4] Letter 138, § 10. [5] Letter 138, § 13.

Christian temper in the Apostle's indignant "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." He also thought that the Apostle's apology for his language was pure sarcasm, since it was impossible for so instructed a person not to realise that the presiding personage was the high priest.

Moral indignation is right,[1] and severity of correction is right; and both are compatible with the Christian disposition.

Christianity does not absolutely prohibit war.[2] The advice to the soldiers in the Gospel was not to throw away their weapons, but to do violence to no man, and to be content with their pay. But to tell a man to be content with his pay implies approval of his profession.

It is observable that Augustine in another letter pleaded with the same statesman to mitigate the penalties incurred by the fanatical and violent Donatists.[3]

No reader of Augustine's letters will fail to appreciate the note of caution and carefulness, the restraint imposed by consciousness of the individual theologian's liability to error, which for the most part pervades his replies to his correspondents. As his reputation increased he became an oracle to some whom he considered unwise admirers. Consequently he puts thoughts forward tentatively and expressly asks for criticism and if need be correction. On one occasion he was led to express his dislike for Cicero's commendatory language about a man who never uttered what he had reason to recall.[4] Augustine held that this was more likely to be true of a perfect fool than of a perfectly wise man. He vastly preferred the Horatian warning: the word once spoken can never be recalled. It was that sense of responsibility for his utterances, he tells us, which led him to keep back several of his works from publication, especially his writings on Genesis and on the Holy Trinity.[5] So again he is anxious about his writings on

[1] Letter 138, § 14. [2] Letter 138, § 15.
[3] Letter 139. [4] Letter 143, § 3. [5] Letter 143, § 4

Free Will. They have passed into many hands and cannot be called in for correction. But if readers will point out errors to Augustine he will be grateful;[1] for if the books cannot be corrected the author may. On certain points he had carefully refrained from dogmatising. Thus, whether the individual soul is derived by transmission from the first man, as the body is, or whether each soul is a new creation, he has not ventured to determine. The subject is most mysterious, and he is bound to confess his ignorance. If any one can inform him from reason or from Scripture what is the truth about this, he will be grateful. He insists on these two sources of knowledge.

"For if reason be found contradicting the authority of the Divine Scriptures, it only deceives by a semblance of truth, however acute it be, for its deductions cannot in that case be true. On the other hand, if, against the most manifest and reliable testimony of reason, anything be set up claiming to have the authority of the Holy Scriptures, he who does this does it through a misapprehension of what he has read, and is setting up against the truth not the real meaning of Scripture, which he has failed to discover, but an opinion of his own; he alleges not what he has found in the Scriptures, but what he has found in himself as their interpreter."[2]

In order to complete Augustine's teaching on the state of the Departed it may be well here to add a summary of his teaching given elsewhere in a work composed for the instruction of Bishop Paulinus. Although it is not included among Augustine's letters yet it is a letter after all: the distinction between letters and treatises being in Augustine's case almost impossible, since the one constantly tended to pass into the other.

Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, wrote to ask Augustine whether he considered that burial at the chapel of a

[1] Letter 143, § 7. Cunningham's translation. [2] *Ibid.*

martyr was an advantage to the dead. The question gave Augustine an opportunity of recording his thoughts on relation to the Departed in the short and very interesting treatise on Care for the Dead.[1] Paulinus held that the religious instincts which prompted men to care for the departed, and more especially the fact that the Universal Church offered supplications for them, could not be without significance; on the other hand this seemed hard to reconcile with the Apostolic words: "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive according to the things done in the body, whether good or bad."[2] This Apostolic declaration warns that everything to profit us after death must be done before death comes; not afterwards, when it is the time to receive according to things done in the body.

The solution of the problem Augustine finds in the principle that the departed can only be aided by the Church[3] if they have made themselves susceptible of such aid by their life when on earth. Thus their being aided by the Church's intercessions does not contradict their requital for things done in the body, but forms part of it. The divisions of the Departed are accordingly three: those who are too saintly to need the Church's intercessions; those who are too evil to be benefited by them; and those of an intermediate type, whose conduct when on earth makes them susceptible of such aid. The type of behaviour on earth determines such susceptibility. If no merit is acquired in this life it is vain to expect it afterwards. Thus the Church is right in her practice of intercession for the Departed, and yet every man is judged according to his works.

This answer, Augustine considers, might suffice. The contradiction is solved.[4] But the importance of the relation between Dead and Living leads him to

[1] *De Cura pro mortuis gerenda*, written about A.D. 421. Works, Gaume's Edition, VI. 865—888.

[2] 2 Cor. v. 10. [3] *De Cura*, § 2. [4] Letter 143, § 3.

further and fuller reflections. The Books of the Maccabees speak of sacrifices offered for the Departed; but even if this were never read of in the Ancient Scriptures, the practice of the Universal Church, which in this point is luminously clear, possesses no small authority. In the priest's prayers at the Altar there is a commendation of the dead. But on the question whether the locality of burial affects the condition of the soul of the dead person, Augustine appeals to sentiments already expressed in the work on the City of God.[1] Care for the burial of the dead is rather a consideration to the living than an advantage to the departed. To which he now adds that in no case should intercessions for the souls of the dead be neglected. The Universal Church herself discharges this office for those who have no near relatives to plead for them.[2] If this intercession be ignored he cannot think that the corpse's proximity to sacred places can aid the departed soul.[3] But a faithful mother's desire for her son to be buried in the church of a Martyr, surely implied a belief that the Martyr's merits would help his soul; which belief was in itself a sort of intercession, and that would aid, if anything can. But yet Augustine would plainly deprecate concern for mere physical proximity to the relics of a saint.[4] The scattering of Martyrs' ashes on the Rhone, which Eusebius records, would never have been permitted by Providence if thereby any loss accrued to the dead. Christ answered this beforehand when He said, "Fear not them that kill the body, but after that have no more that they can do." Human sentiment indeed might be thereby distressed by anticipation:[5] which explains, Augustine thinks, the Old Testament menace: "Thy body shall not come into the sepulchres of thy fathers." But if we think in accordance with the Gospel, we rest

[1] Letter 143, § 4. [2] Letter 143, § 6.
Letter 143, § 7. [4] Letter 143, § 8. [5] Letter 143, § 9.

assured that the locality in which the body lies cannot affect the soul. Augustine refers here [1] to stories of the dead appearing to the living in dreams and pleading for burial. He is not convinced that such apparitions are consciously created by the dead, since the living appear also to us in dreams, and yet are quite unconscious that they appear. Augustine quotes a case from personal experience. Eulogius, a pupil of his at Carthage, told him that when preparing to lecture on Cicero he came upon a passage which he could not understand. But in the night in a dream Augustine himself appeared and gave the explanation. "It was not myself," says Augustine. "It was my image unconsciously to myself. For I was at Milan, between us lay the sea." Augustine's inference is that visions of the Departed do not necessarily involve their personal intervention, since similar visions of the living are experienced apart from their conscious activity. His solution is, that such visions are the products of some heavenly agency.[2] If the souls of the departed were present in the affairs of the living and can speak to us in dreams Augustine is certain that his mother who had followed him over seas and land on earth would certainly not have failed to appear to him. He cannot credit that the happier conditions of the other world have rendered the Departed forgetful of this, and that she should neglect to comfort her sorrowing son, whom she never could bear to see in distress. To Augustine's mind the Psalmist's thought is applicable here: "When my father and my mother forsake me the Lord taketh me up." [3] And if a departed mother does not present herself to us again, still less can others of the dead know what we do or what we endure. "Thou art our Father though Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel recognises us not." Hence the promise: "Thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see the evil which I will bring upon this

[1] Letter 143, § 12. [2] Letter 143, § 16. [3] Psalm xxvi. 10.

place."[1] There, then, are the spirits of the dead where they do not see what is done or experienced in this life by mankind. The parable of Dives and Lazarus is not in contradiction with this. The rich man remembers his brethren on earth; but he is not said to be acquainted with their state. Just as we pray for the dead without a knowledge of their condition.[2] Augustine nevertheless suggests that each fresh accession to the other world would bring increase of information; if what they are permitted to remember they are also permitted to impart. Angels also, if permitted, may do the same.

The appearance of the departed Samuel to King Saul and his prediction of Saul's future may,[3] or may not, involve an actual appearance of the dead, but have been caused by other means. The Book Ecclesiasticus says of Samuel that[4] "after his death he prophesied." Augustine is aware that some may think this unconvincing, since the Book is not contained in the Hebrew Canon of Scripture. In any case this objection will not hold of the Evangelical manifestations of Moses and Elijah.

How it is that the departed,[5] although ignorant of the condition of the living, do nevertheless answer their petitions? Augustine acknowledges that he cannot explain. Religious experience affirms that the departed saints do answer petitions. And this experience Augustine respects. Perhaps it is that they possess a modified ubiquity; perhaps they pray generally for the living in ignorance of their actual state, as we do for the Departed; and the Almighty, Who is everywhere present, hears their prayers and answers as He pleases. But the question is, Augustine confesses, beyond his powers. He would rather inquire of those who know.

[1] 2 Kings xxii. 20.
[2] *De Cura*, § 18.
[3] *cf.* Augustine's reply to Simplician 2, 4: "De diversis quæstionibus."
[4] Ecclus. xlvi. 20.
[5] *De Cura*, §§ 19 and 20.

CHAPTER VII

THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN AUGUSTÍNE AND JEROME

IT would be possible to group together Augustine's letters to various other persons besides Jerome. For example, Paulinus of Nola. But the series with Jerome is by far the most celebrated, and possesses a distinct importance of its own.

The subjects discussed are—

1. The translation of Scripture from the Original instead of from the Greek. The importance of a Version already in possession. Bishop Lightfoot's use of the correspondence at the time of the discussion on our Revised Version will be remembered.

2. The dispute between S. Peter and S. Paul recorded in Galatians.[1]

3. The question of the Origin of the Soul. This subject became inevitable when the Pelagian Controversy raised discussion on Original Sin.

The correspondence between Augustine and Jerome throws considerable light on the characters of the two great men who were in many ways so deeply contrasted. It seems that the two never saw one another. This is a little curious. For Augustine went to Rome in 383 and remained there until he left for Milan in 385, while Jerome was resident in Rome from 381 to 385. And if Augustine was obscure at the time, most certainly

[1] For modern accounts of the discussion between Augustine and Jerome on this subject see Möhler: *Gesammelte Schriften und Aufsätze*, 1839, pp. 1–18; Zahn in *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1894, p. 435; Dufey in the *Revue du Clergé français*, 1901, pp. 141–9.

Jerome was not. No name roused more attention and opposition than his. It is, therefore, strange that Augustine never saw him. On the other hand, Augustine's interests during those years were not in the direction of the Church. Yet it is strange that so alert a mind was unconscious of the perfect fury which Jerome's sermons and writings roused in the religious circles of the capital. But movements within the Church do not always greatly affect the world.

This correspondence was extended over twenty-one years.

In the first letter[1] which he wrote to Jerome, probably in 394, Augustine lays stress on the fact that they had never met; but adds that he has a good idea of Jerome's appearance, since Alypius had paid Jerome a visit and had reported to Augustine his impressions. He informs Jerome that Alypius, now a Bishop, is his most intimate friend; and that if they are two in body, they are one in mind. Augustine calls Jerome his fellow-presbyter, although it is quite possible that this letter was written after the writer had been consecrated Bishop. Fellow-presbyter is Augustine's usual description of Jerome (see Letters 67 and 71); also of other priests after his own consecration.

Augustine's purpose in writing is to give Jerome some advice on the direction which his studies were taking,[2] and to criticise one of his interpretations. Augustine was anxious that Jerome should confine his attention to the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures and should not concern himself with translating direct from the Hebrew into Latin. The Bishop considered that very high authority must be allowed to the Greek translators. He notes that subsequent translators are unable to agree. His inference is that it is not credible that any further light can be discovered. With regard to the differences between more recent

[1] Letter 28.

[2] Letter 28, § 2.

translations he puts to Jerome the following dilemma: Either these passages are obscure or else they are clear. If they are obscure, Jerome is as likely to misunderstand them as the other translators. If they are clear, it is not likely that the Septuagint translators misunderstood.

The other subject in Jerome's writings which exercises the Bishop's mind is the explanation given by the critic of the famous dispute in Galatians between S. Paul and S. Peter.

The interpretation of this passage had a curious history before Augustine's time. Two opinions on S. Peter's conduct had existed. One was that he failed in moral courage, and vacillated once more as he did at the trial of his Master. Among the early supporters of this interpretation was S. Cyprian. (Letter 71.) The other opinion was that such inconsistency was unlikely on the part of one who supported S. Paul at the Council of Jerusalem. A decided reluctance prevailed to ascribe such vacillations to one so distinguished. Accordingly a totally different construction was placed upon the scene. One of the greatest exponents of this second interpretation was S. John Chrysostom.

S. John Chrysostom observed that many readers of Galatians imagine that S. Paul accused S. Peter of dissimulation. But, said Chrysostom, this opinion comes of superficial reading. Peter is a person whose very name suggests immovableness,[1] and whose faith was not likely to fail. Chrysostom accordingly maintained that the two Apostles arranged the scene at Antioch beforehand. "I withstood him to the face" means, in Chrysostom's opinion, "I withstood him in appearance, but not in reality." And "because he was blameable" means not blamed by S. Paul, but blamed by the Gentile converts who were offended at his aloofness. If the contention between the two Apostles had been a real one, Chrysostom is sure they would

[1] Works, Edition Gaume, Tom. X. 815, 816.

have held it privately, for fear of scandalising the believers. The whole scene, then, was a diplomatic arrangement. The Jewish converts would not have listened to criticism from S. Paul. S. Peter, therefore, pretended to take their side, and allowed S. Paul to criticise him for his conduct. S. Peter offered no reply to S. Paul's reproaches, so that when the Jewish converts found that their chief had no defence to make, they themselves would be compelled to fall into line with S. Paul's instructions. This was certainly subtle. But the interpretation inflicted appalling violence on the text. And it seems extraordinary that Chrysostom should have performed so perverse a feat of exegesis.

Yet this interpretation was widely prevalent both before Chrysostom's time and afterwards. It was traced to Origen and was supported by distinguished writers. S. Jerome read Chrysostom's explanation and adopted it.

Jerome's explanation of the incident at Antioch was that[1] S. Peter, who was well aware of the indifference of Jewish observances, and showed it by associating for a while with the Gentile converts, withdrew from the Gentiles simply out of diplomatic desire to win the Jews. He, therefore, pretended a zeal for Jewish observances which he did not really feel. In Jerome's opinion this attitude of S. Peter led S. Paul, who saw through the older Apostle's motive, but saw also that it was endangering the doctrine of Christian Grace, to counteract S. Peter's diplomacy by pretending to denounce him. Thus S. Paul, the experienced controversialist, adopted a new and original method of refuting the Jewish exclusiveness. Jerome explains that if any one supposes S. Paul to have really intended to rebuke S. Peter he is mistaken. For that would put S. Paul in contradiction with his own statement that to the Jews he became as a Jew in order to win the Jews; and in contradiction also with the fact that he allowed Timothy to be

[1] Jerome's Works. Edit. Vallarsi. Verona 1737. Tom. VII. 405.

circumcised. Thus, as Jerome put it, S. Paul met dissimulation by dissimulation; a pretence of observing the Law by a pretence of rebuke. Biblical instances of dissimulation, urged Jerome, could be found in Jehu's treatment of the worshippers of Baal. And indeed dissimulation may be justified where it tends to spiritual advantage.

Jerome mentions that certain writers maintained that the Peter named in this incident was not the Apostle but some other individual otherwise unknown. This was apparently suggested to protect the Apostle from the criticism of Porphyry, who charged him with having erred. Jerome dismisses this view as incredible. The invention of another Peter in order to exclude the belief that Peter erred is a desperate expedient.

S. Paul then artfully simulated an indignation with S. Peter which he did not feel, while in reality he corrected the Jewish adherents through rebukes ostensibly addressed to S. Peter. If any person is not satisfied with this interpretation, says Jerome, let him explain how S. Paul could condemn in another what he practised himself.

This exposition by Jerome is more than Augustine can endure.[1] In his opinion it is exceedingly serious. For if an Apostle may officially advocate what he believes to be false, the whole foundation of faith in their utterances is undermined. This theory of the fabrication of an *officiosum mendacium* is, in Augustine's opinion, simply fatal to the belief in the veracity of Holy Scripture. He is sure that there can be no room in Apostolic utterances for piously intended falsehoods.[2] He points out the Apostle's earnest and solemn insistence on the duty of truth. This was S. Paul's express declaration in regard to the doctrine of the Resurrection. Nothing could exceed his horror at being found false witness concerning God.

[1] Letter 28, § 3. [2] Letter 28, § 4.

Augustine pictures S. Paul's feelings if any one were to urge: "Why are you so shocked by this falsehood, when the thing which you have said, even if it were false, tends very greatly to the glory of God?" This promotion of edification at the expense of sincerity and truth would be to S. Paul simply abhorrent. Augustine is sure of that.

If this maxim of concealing truth in the interests of expediency be once admitted, one result will be that individuals believe one portion of Apostolic teaching and reject another. If Jerome maintains this theory he is bound to lay down rules by which it will be possible to ascertain when false statements are permissible and when they are not.[1]

Jerome wrote to Augustine before the letter from Africa reached him. He sent one letter in 396 by subdeacon Asterius and another in 397 by the priest Præsidius.[2] The purpose of the former was to congratulate Augustine on his consecration; of the latter to commend Præsidius to his notice, and to salute Alypius. Jerome in his Monastery at Bethlehem is much troubled by the disturbed condition of the outer world.

Augustine replied to these letters rather dissatisfied with Jerome's brevity.[3] The Bishop a second time criticises Jerome's opinion that S. Paul's opposition to S. Peter at Antioch was diplomatic and not genuine. S. Paul's emphatic protest, "Now the things that I write unto you behold before God I lie not," is to Augustine conclusive proof that the writer did not simulate an unreal grievance against S. Peter's behaviour. This conclusion is still further confirmed by S. Paul's own words, "When I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel."[4] If S. Peter was after all walking uprightly then S. Paul's assertion is false. And if what he says in this place is false, how

[1] Letter 28, § 5.
[2] Letter 39.
[3] Letter 40, A.D. 397.
[4] Letter 40, § 3.

are we to know when he is telling us what is true? That question will be answered according to individual inclination and preference.

Jerome does not need to be informed[1] that the words "to the Jews I became a Jew that I might gain the Jews" (1 Cor. ix. 20) refer to sympathy, not to dissimulation. S. Paul did not criticise S. Peter for observing the Jewish tradition but for compelling the Gentiles to Judaize.[2]

Augustine therefore calls on Jerome to retract; to sing a Palinode.[3]

Augustine further observes that he had previously written to Jerome on this subject. But he is aware that the letter could not have reached Palestine as the bearer was unable to complete his journey. That was apparently two years before (see Letter 28).

Some correspondence had already taken place between Augustine and Jerome[4] on the writings of Origen. These letters appear to have been lost. But from the allusion on the present occasion Augustine was evidently keenly conscious alike of the value and of the dangers of Origen's writings. He must have said as much to Jerome. Jerome, who had committed himself to an enthusiastic approval of Origen, which he afterwards found inconvenient, was now particularly sensitive of his own reputation for orthodoxy, and appears to have replied with the rather obvious remark that in ecclesiastical writers we must commend what is orthodox and condemn what is heretical. Augustine answers that he hardly required this piece of information. What he does require to know is definitely the precise subjects upon which Origen deviated from the truth. He suggests that Jerome's work on ecclesiastical writers would be greatly improved if he were to add to his notice of heretics a statement of their theories which the Catholic

[1] Letter 40, § 4.
[2] Letter 40, § 5.
[3] Letter 40, § 7.
[4] Letter 40, § 9.

Church has condemned. Indeed, if Jerome would write a small book on heresies to be avoided, he would confer great service on those who are unable to read Greek.

Unfortunately, Augustine's letter of criticism on Jerome's expositions, instead of reaching Jerome, reached other people first. When Jerome heard about it he wrote[1] complaining that Augustine is reported to have written a book against him and to have sent it to Rome. Augustine replied that he had not written a book against him, but had only criticised some of Jerome's expositions in correspondence. The distinction between a book and a letter is in Augustine's case somewhat subtle, as his letters quite frequently assumed the proportion of a treatise.

Jerome replied to this that Augustine's criticisms upon him[2] have now arrived, and he finds that the Bishop invites him to retract his exposition. Jerome says that he is not such a fool as to be hurt by Augustine's interpretations. But he advises the younger man not to challenge his senior in the field of Scripture exposition.[3] Jerome is old and his work is done. Let Augustine leave him in peace.[4] None the less an old ox can give an ugly kick sometimes.

But Augustine felt it impossible to act on this advice.[5] For Jerome was engaged in labours which the Bishop strongly disapproved. He was translating the Old Testament from the Hebrew instead of from the Greek. Accordingly Augustine wrote again in the following year. The difficulties of correspondence in those days were immense. Augustine had already sent a letter to Jerome by a priest travelling to Syria. But the priest was delayed in order to be consecrated Bishop, and shortly after died. So the letter was now entrusted to another messenger.

In the present letter Augustine takes Jerome to task

[1] Letter 67. [2] Letter 68, ? A.D. 402. [3] Letter 68, § 2.
[4] Letter 68, A.D. 402. [5] Letter 71, A.D. 403.

for translating the Book of Job from the Hebrew.[1] They already possess a translation from the Greek. Jerome would be much better occupied in interpreting the Greek and Canonical Scriptures. For if his rendering of the Hebrew comes into use in Churches, the idea will prevail that the Latin Churches differ from the Greek Churches.[2] Augustine cites a case where Jerome's Version of the Book of Jonah from the Hebrew was introduced, and created such opposition among the people that the Bishop had to apply to the Jews to know whether Jerome's Latin or the older Latin represented the Original. Even then the Bishop was forced either to withdraw Jerome's rendering or else to lose his congregation.[3]

Augustine, therefore, strongly advises Jerome to base his translations on the Greek of the LXX and not upon the Hebrew.

It was now seven years since Augustine's first letter[4] on the incident at Antioch. Jerome now in 403 or 404 replied remarking that Augustine was constantly writing letters to him, and requesting an answer to a certain document which has at last reached him. But Jerome professes himself unable to understand why a document intended for himself should be circulated in Italy and in Rome, while no copy came to the person for whom it was intended. A copy was found by a deacon, Brother Sysinius, five years ago not in Augustine's possession, not in Africa, but in an island of the Adriatic.

Some of his friends, who abound in Jerusalem and the Holy Places, are suggesting that Augustine is making all this fuss simply from motives of vainglory and ambition. Jerome has no wish to oppose a Bishop of his own communion ; more especially since some of the remarks in Augustine's letter appear to him no better than heretical. Either let Augustine send an unmistak-

[1] Letter 71, § 3.
[2] Letter 71, § 4.
[3] Letter 71, § 5.
[4] Letter 72, ? A.D. 403 or 404.

ably genuine signed letter, or let him cease to worry an old man in his cell. But if he wants to show his ability let him find some youthful competitor fit to meet a Bishop. There are plenty of such people in Rome. The Veteran Jerome will applaud Augustine's victories. Like Barzillai of Gilead, the charms of David's court can possess no attractions for Jerome. He willingly relinquishes all the pleasures of youth to his son.

The recluse observes that Augustine had denied the charge of having written a book against Jerome.[1] How is it, then, that Italy possesses what Augustine has not written? And why ask Jerome to reply to what you deny that you wrote? Jerome is particularly exasperated by being invited to retract his opinions. It is not becoming for one who from early manhood to old age has toiled with his brethren in a small religious house to write anything against a Bishop of his own communion.

After all, he does not know much of Augustine's writings, except the *Soliloquies* and the *Commentaries on the Psalms*. It would not be hard to show how far these diverge from the Greek interpreters. With which Parthian shot he takes farewell of one whom he calls "my son in years, my father in ecclesiastical position."

It was not easy to reply in suitable terms to such a letter as this.[2] Augustine was evidently dismayed by the rude and savage temper of the learned old recluse, and did his best to soothe and conciliate. He has sent Jerome a copy of the incriminated document by one of his deacons, and hopes that by this time it will be in Jerome's hands. The letter which Jerome has written contains evidences alike of benevolence and vexation. Augustine did not mean to give offence. Nothing could be further from his intention. But since his letter has had that effect, the good Bishop asks Jerome's forgiveness. Augustine then quotes from Jerome's angry epistle

[1] Letter 72, § 4.

[2] Letter 73, A.D. 404.

a passage in which the old priest condescended to a more kindly tone, and expressed the wish that he and Augustine might meet. "Yes, indeed," echoes the Bishop. "It is distance which makes these difficulties. I wrote likewise concerning the passage in Galatians when I was a *Juvenis*, and now, lo! I am already *Senex*, and I have received no reply." He wishes he could pay Jerome a visit. Since that is impossible, he contemplates sending one of his sons in order to obtain instruction from Jerome. For Augustine has not and cannot hope to have, the knowledge of Scripture which Jerome possesses. Whatever capacities he may possess for study have to be entirely devoted to the instruction of his people. His ecclesiastical occupations preclude any further research.

Then he touches upon a very delicate matter indeed. It was notorious that Jerome and Rufinus, formerly the greatest of friends, were now the bitterest of enemies. Augustine had been reading Jerome's own published utterances about it. And he can only say, Woe to the world because of offences! And because iniquity abounds the love of many shall wax cold. What man will not now fear to find in his dearest friend a future foe, if Jerome and Rufinus can be enemies. Augustine becomes deeply earnest over this. He was profoundly moved that two men intimately united in continuous study of the Sacred Writings, separated from secular pursuits, unencumbered by worldly affairs, living together in the very land which Christ's sacred feet had trod; the very land where He said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you," being also men mature in age, and dwelling habitually on heavenly themes, should deal in terms of virulent antagonism. "Truly," exclaims the Bishop, "man's life on earth is a period of trial. If I could anywhere meet you both, I would throw myself at your feet, and there weeping till I could weep no more, I would appeal with all the eloquence of love, first to each of you for his own sake,

then to each of you for each other's sake and for the sake of other men, above all for the weak brethren for whom Christ died, whose salvation is imperilled: you who occupy a position so conspicuous on the world's platform: I would beseech not to publish bitter words which, after the quarrel is ended, you will not be able to withdraw, and which you will fear to read for fear of rousing evil passions again."[1]

Augustine then acknowledges that some of Jerome's utterances had terrified him. He could not forget the facts while reading Jerome's letter to himself.

If mutual inquiry and discussion between Augustine and Jerome can be conducted without bitterness, be it so. But if neither can criticise the other's writings without loss of charity, let discussion cease and charity be pursued. Let us only pursue knowledge which puffeth up so long as no injury is done to love which edifies.

To appreciate this reference in Augustine's letter to the quarrel between Jerome and Rufinus the whole story should be read in Duchesne, *Histoire Ancienne de l'Église*, Tom. III. pp. 38–68. Ed. 1910. Here it may be sufficient to say the dispute between the two aged students was about the heretical tendencies of Origen. Until the year 392 Jerome had freely translated Origen's works and had spoken very highly in commending them. However, about that date, through the bustling activities of that inveterate heresy-hunter Epiphanius, Palestine became torn into two ferocious camps of friends and opponents of Origen.

Then Rufinus, Jerome's friend, who was at that time visiting Rome, produced a version of Origen's great work *De Principiis*, carefully omitting, however, from his translation all Origen's unorthodox opinions, on the ground that these had been interpolated by his enemies. Rufinus went so far as to identify Jerome's name with

[1] Letter 73.

his own version. Jerome's friends in Rome thereupon stirred up the old recluse of Bethlehem to dissociate himself from Rufinus and his translations. Jerome accordingly published a complete translation of Origen's work containing all the incriminating theories which Rufinus had discreetly omitted. Thereupon Rome moved itself, and issued a condemnation of Origen, prohibiting his works. Then Rufinus published a self-defence. Jerome, particularly sensitive for his reputation for orthodoxy, fell on Rufinus with all the unscrupulousness and ferocity of which he was capable in his worst moments. It was Jerome's unrestrained abuse and bitterness which scandalised all who knew him, and called forth, among other letters, Augustine's remonstrances. Rufinus withdrew into silence. Ten years later he died. But even then the ancient fury revived, and Jerome in the most unedifying and deplorable terms gloated over his friend's decease. The scorpion had expired: the grunter was now dead: and Jerome was delighted.

There was certainly need of more than ordinary diplomatic caution in conducting a theological discussion with a student of this disposition.

By way of precaution against giving further offence Augustine submitted his letters to the criticism of Bishop Præsidius, asking him to correct it, if he saw anything defective either in its substance or its form.[1]

Before this fourth letter from Augustine had reached Bethlehem, Jerome had written his reply to Augustine's criticism on the dispute at Antioch between S. Paul and S. Peter.[2] Jerome says that three letters, or rather small treatises, have arrived from Augustine. Then he cautiously leaves a way to evade the statements contained in his own reply, by saying that he is compelled to write hastily, since the carrier leaves in three days. None the less he writes a very careful answer. His

[1] Letter 74. [2] Letter 75, A.D. 404.

bitterness has subsided. He is now sure that Augustine desires the victory of truth, that he is not seeking his own glory, but Christ's; he is contending with a peaceful mind.

Then, as to his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, and Augustine's opinion that the dispute between the two Apostles was not simulated but genuine, Jerome explains that he had expressly stated in the preface to this work that he had made a collection of the comments of other interpreters. He had followed the Commentaries of Origen. Then he quoted Didymus the Blind; also Apollinaris of Laodicea, who, however, has since forsaken the Church; also Alexander, a former heretic; Eusebius also, of Emesa;[1] Theodore, too, of Heracleum; last, but not least, there was John Chrysostom, who recently, in pontifical dignity, was ruling the Church at Constantinople[2]—and who followed the interpretation given by Origen. This is an imposing array of eminent expositors, thinks Jerome. "If you reproach me for being in error, allow me to be in error with such men as these."

So much, then, for the authority of his interpretation. Now for the interpretation itself. Jerome insisted that long before S. Paul's supposed opposition to him at Antioch, S. Peter was well aware that the Law was not to be imposed on adherents of the Gospel. Indeed, in Jerome's opinion S. Peter was the author of the decision in the Council of Jerusalem. Jerome further calls attention to the high value which S. Paul ascribes to S. Peter's authority. Did not S. Paul declare that after three years he went to Jerusalem[3] to see Peter and abode with him fifteen days? And again: "Fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem . . . and I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any

[1] Letter 75, § 4. [2] Letter 75, § 6. [3] Gal. i. 18.

means I should run, or had run, in vain."[1] This passage shows, says Jerome, that S. Paul had no security in preaching the Gospel unless he was strengthened by the opinion of Peter and those who were with him.[2]

In the case under dispute Jerome maintains that Peter's belief was orthodox, but that he was led by fear of the Judaisers to dissimulate his real belief. He was afraid that the Jews, whose Apostle he was, should revolt from the faith of Christ in consequence of the Gentile neglect of Mosaic observances.

Now, argued Jerome, S. Paul did precisely the same thing.[3] For he circumcised Timothy. And why? Because of the Jews who were in that place. Let S. Paul therefore excuse in S. Peter the very thing which he did himself. So again with S. Paul's vow at Cenchrea. So again with his conformity to Jewish customs in the Temple.[4]

Therefore, said Jerome, both S. Paul and S. Peter professed a mere external conformity to Judaism through fear of the Jews.[5]

It was not an "officiosum mendacium" in the Apostles Peter and Paul.[6] Jerome resents the idea. It was an "honesta dispensatio." It showed the prudence of both. But Jerome makes it plain that what commended this interpretation to himself was that it protected S. Peter from the disdainful criticism of such men as Porphyrius, as well as that it protected S. Paul from the charge of having rebuked in another the very line he himself had on other occasions adopted.

Jerome then proceeded to criticise Augustine's exposition.[7] Augustine held that S. Paul's conduct was prompted by sympathy, not by fear, when he says that to the Jews he became as a Jew in order that he might gain the Jews. This was genuine compassion, not dis-

[1] Gal. ii. 1–2.
[2] Letter 75, § 8.
[3] Letter 75, § 9.
[4] Letter 75, § 10.
[5] Letter 75, § 11.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Letter 75, § 12.

simulation. He acted like a physician to a sick person. He humoured them. S. Paul had been a Jew. If he was now a Christian he would still adhere to Jewish observances as an Apostle, in order to show there was nothing hurtful in them so long as a man did not place his hope of salvation in them.

S. Peter would not have been in error in permitting Jewish converts to retain their previous rites. His error consisted in forcing these things on the Gentiles: in compelling the Gentiles to Judaise.

Jerome cannot tolerate Augustine's exposition.[1] The opinion that a converted Jew might retain his former practices, would justify every sect of semi-Jewish character: Ebionites, Nazarenes, etc.; in fact, all those communions which attempt to be both Jews and Christians, and succeed in being neither Christians nor Jews.

How could S. Paul, Jerome asks indignantly, retain the sacraments of the Jews after his conversion to Christ?[2] Did not S. Paul say that if a man was circumcised Christ would profit him nothing? Did he not say, "If ye are led by the Spirit ye are not under the law?" You are a Bishop, a Master in the Church of Christ, says Jerome; prove the reality of your explanation by accepting a Jewish convert who has his son circumcised and keeps the Sabbath. Then you will know that it is harder to justify your own explanation than to find fault with that of other people.[3]

Jerome pursued the subject with hard mechanical distinctions.[4] Augustine said these Jewish rites were not necessary to salvation. Jerome answered: If they do not bring salvation why are they observed? Either, adds Jerome, a thing is good or else it is bad. There is no middle state of moral indifference. These legal observances must be either one or the other. You say they are good. I say they are bad.

[1] Letter 75, § 13.
[2] Letter 75, § 14.
[3] Letter 75, § 15.
[4] Letter 75, § 16.

Then, relapsing into one of his moods of excruciatingly bad taste,[1] Jerome sarcastically requests Augustine not to rouse against him the clamour of the ignorant little congregation who venerate Augustine as a Bishop, and when they hear him orating in church accord him the honour due to his ministry. Only let Augustine leave the half-decrepit old man alone, and find other people to instruct or reprove. Seas and lands lie between them. So great is the distance that the sound of Augustine's voice can seldom reach so far. And if Augustine does write letters they reach Italy and Rome sooner than the person to whom they should have been directed.

Augustine here displayed greater critical insight than Jerome. The Bishop appreciated better than the priest what was permissible and natural in a period of transition from the Old Dispensation to the New. Jerome's challenge to the Bishop, to allow Jewish observances at Hippo in the fifth century which S. Paul thought expedient to allow in the first century, shows a lack of historical imagination; a rigorous application of expediency without regard to altered circumstances.

After this reply to Augustine's criticism on the exposition of Galatians, Jerome turns to the Bishop's remonstrance with him for translating the Scriptures direct from the Hebrew.

Augustine had thrown his argument into the form of a syllogism.[2] Either the passages which the Greek translators have rendered were obscure or they were obvious. If they were obscure Jerome is as likely to be mistaken as they were. If obvious, the Greek translators could not have been mistaken.

Jerome replies with another example of the same syllogism. Either the Scriptures which the ancient expositors have interpreted were obscure or they were obvious. If the former, why does Augustine presume

[1] Letter 75, § 18. [2] Letter 76, § 20.

to think he can explain them any better? If the latter, Augustine's expositions are superfluous. Jerome adds a formidable list of earlier expositors of the Psalms. Yet in spite of this impressive array of authorities on the Psalms, Augustine did not hesitate to add another exposition which, as Jerome has already reminded the author, he had read. Let Augustine allow other persons the same freedom which he has exercised for himself. All that Jerome has done is to let men know what the Hebrew original contains. If they had rather not know, nothing compels them.[1]

As to the case cited by Augustine of the Bishop who introduced Jerome's version of Jonah and had to withdraw it rather than lose his congregation: that could not alter the fact that the version was a faithful reproduction of the original. If any Jews disputed it, that only betrayed their malice or their ignorance.

On this note of imperturbable confidence the letter closes; not, however, without another disdainful expression, as of one bored to distraction by the ignorance of his contemporaries. Jerome begs Augustine to let an old man rest. Let the young man, set in pontifical dignity, teach the crowds. As for Jerome, it is enough for him to whisper to one poor reader in the corner of a monastery.

It would scarcely be a matter for surprise if correspondence ceased, or was, at least, temporarily interrupted after such letters as these. But Jerome wrote again. It is quite possible that he did not realise the exasperating nature of his bitter and disdainful language.[2] As a matter of fact, he wrote again to Augustine in the following year (405); this time in a far gentler spirit, even asking to be remembered to one of Augustine's friends and disciples, Bishop Alypius, but ending with an unfortunate expression about playing in the fields of Scripture.

[1] Letter 75, § 22.

[2] Letter 81, A.D 404

To this letter Augustine replied,[1] harping, also most unfortunately, on Jerome's closing word. Augustine takes the word prosaically. He fails to see that the apparently frivolous expression may cover deep earnestness:

> "Looking below light speech we utter
> When frothy spume and frequent sputter
> Prove that the soul's depths boil in earnest."

There is a curious lack of humour in Augustine's remark that he is prepared for serious study not for play. And he takes occasion to inform Jerome of his profound conviction that no writer of the Canonical Scriptures has committed any error in his writing. If Augustine encounters any passage which seems contrary to the truth, then either the text is defective or the translator misrepresents the original, or else the reader has misunderstood the meaning. Doubtless Jerome would not desire his writings to be treated with the deference due to the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures.

"Now," argues Augustine, "if I am bound in virtue of your own life and character[2] to believe that you have not written insincerely, much more am I bound to maintain that the Apostle Paul believed what he wrote when he speaks of Peter not walking rightly according to the truth of the Gospel. Of whose sincerity can I be sure if not of the sincerity of S. Paul? More especially is this the case where the Apostle has prefaced his utterances with the solemn declaration: 'The things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.'

"If any one maintains that it is better to believe that the Apostle Paul[3] wrote something which is not true than that the Apostle Peter did something which is not right, this would be equivalent to saying that it is better to believe that the Gospel relates what is false than to

[1] Letter 82, A.D. 405.
[2] Letter 82, § 4.
[3] Letter 82, § 5.

believe that S. Peter denied his Master. Thus reluctance to believe that an exemplary and distinguished person was occasionally to blame, leads men to bring the whole of the Sacred Scriptures into suspicion."

This treatment of Scripture is, in Augustine's opinion,[1] worse than what is done by the Manichæans. For while they indeed reject statements of Scripture, they do so not on the ground that the apostolic statements are erroneous but on the ground that the text has been corrupted. It is quite another matter, and immeasurably more serious, to charge the Apostles with affirming what is false.

Jerome says it is incredible that S. Paul rebuked S. Peter for doing the very thing which he did himself.[2] Augustine replies: "I am not now inquiring what S. Paul did, but what S. Paul wrote. If S. Peter acted rightly, then S. Paul has written what is false; but if what S. Paul wrote is true, then it is true that S. Peter was not then acting in accordance with the truth of the Gospel.

Augustine maintains that S. Peter acted as he did with a view to compel the Gentiles to live as Jews.[3] Now there is no parallel between this and the conduct of S. Paul in the case of Timothy, or in his conformity to Jewish observances at Jerusalem on S. James's advice.

S. Paul's occasional conformity to Jewish observances was intended to refute the Jewish suspicion that he regarded such observances as deadly.[4]

If the Council of Jerusalem had already taken place,[5] then it was already decreed that no man should force the Gentiles to Judaise. If, as Augustine himself believed, the discussion between S. Paul and S. Peter occurred before that Council met, none the less was S. Paul anxious that S. Peter should openly profess what he inwardly believed, for both Apostles really

[1] Letter 82, § 6.
[2] Letter 82, § 7.
[3] Letter 82, § 8.
[4] Letter 82, § 9.
[5] Letter 82, § 10.

agreed in principles. S. Paul was not teaching S. Peter what the faith was, but only rebuking his dissimulation in forcing the Gentiles to act as Jews.

Augustine can see no reason, in spite of Jerome's[1] authority, why the Jewish observances are not to be placed among things indifferent rather than among those that are intrinsically good or intrinsically bad. This was his own opinion, for instance, with regard to fasting on the Sabbath. It was a thing indifferent. Observances which were not to be imposed on the Gentile convert were not necessarily to be forbidden to the convert from Israel.

"But why may I not say regarding those institutions[2] of the old economy, that they are neither good nor bad: not good since men are not by them justified, they having been only shadows predicting the grace by which we are justified; and not bad since they were divinely appointed as suitable both to the time and to the people? . . . I would esteem it a favour to be informed by your Sincerity, whether any saint, coming from the East to Rome, would be guilty of dissimulation if he fasted on the seventh day of each week, excepting the Saturday before Easter. For if we say that it is wrong to fast on the seventh day, we shall condemn not only the Church of Rome, but also many other Churches, both neighbouring and more remote, in which the same custom continues to be observed. If on the other hand we pronounce it wrong not to fast on the seventh day, how great is our presumption in censuring so many Churches in the East, and by far the greater part of the Christian world! Or do you prefer to say of this practice, that it is a thing indifferent in itself, but commendable in him who conforms with it, not as a dissembler, but from a seemly desire for the fellowship and deference for the feelings of others? No precept, however, concerning this practice is given to Christians in the Canonical Books. How

[1] Letter 82, § 10.

[2] Letter 82, § 14.

much more then may I shrink from pronouncing that to be bad which I cannot deny to be of Divine institution: this fact being admitted by me in the exercise of the same faith by which I know that not through these observances, but by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ I am justified."[1]

Accordingly Augustine contends[2] that the Old Testament regulations of ceremonial were predictions of the Christian realities. On the advent of the realities the former remained only to be studied but not to be any longer observed. They were tolerated for a time, but were not to be enforced for fear of being understood to be conditions of salvation. S. Peter's fault consisted in pretending to accept this view, which he did not really hold. Consequently S. Paul correctly criticised him for not walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel. There was no dissimulation in S. Paul's conduct. He was perfectly frank. He could permit the occasional observance of the Jewish ceremonies, but he never imposed them as necessary.

But the time for such toleration of Jewish ceremonies[3] was long since past, and S. Paul's occasional permission of them could no longer in Augustine's opinion be followed in the fifth century.

The case of S. Peter and S. Paul[4] raises the question whether it is permissible to speak falsely on the ground of expediency. Is it at any time a Christian man's duty to say what is false? Augustine refers to S. Matt. v. 37, S. James v.12, Psalm v. 6. Is it not required in stewards that a man be found faithful?

Accordingly the true interpretation of the incident[5] is that S. Paul spoke with entire sincerity. "And Peter himself received, with the holy and loving humility which became him, the rebuke which Paul, in the interests of truth, and with the boldness of love administered." Therein Peter left to those who came after

[1] Cunningham's translation, I. 327.
[2] Letter 82, § 15.
[3] Letter 82, § 17.
[4] Letter 82, § 21.
[5] Letter 82, § 22.

him an example, that, if at any time they deviated from the right path, they should not think it beneath them to accept correction from their juniors. On that occasion, therefore, Paul was to be praised for upright courage, and Peter for holy humility.

Jerome had defended his opinion [1] by appeal to the authority of seven other expositors. He had asked to be allowed to remain in error in the company of such distinguished people. But Augustine shrewdly observes that four of these seven are questionable. For the interpreter of Laodicea has, on Jerome's own admission, abandoned the Church; Alexander is a former heretic, also on Jerome's admission; Didymus and Origen are both sharply criticised by Jerome himself, in recent writings, and on matters of great importance. Three only of his seven remain. And to those three Augustine opposes three others: Cyprian, Ambrose and S. Paul himself. For S. Paul forbids us to ascribe to him dissimulation when he says: "The things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." Augustine, therefore is not at all overcome by Jerome's appeal to authorities. He will not allow Jerome's right to be in error with anybody.

S. Paul's claim that to the Jews he became as a Jew,[2] and to the Gentiles as a Gentile, was to be understood of sympathy and not of dissimulation. Augustine explains this at considerable length.

As to Jerome's severe charge [3] that Augustine had sent a book to Rome against him, Augustine replies, first, that it was not a book but a letter; secondly, that it was not sent to Rome but to Jerome; thirdly, that it was not against him but only a friendly discussion. As to the insinuation which Jerome discovered in the request that he would sing a palinode or recant, Augustine assures him that nothing could be farther from his

[1] Letter 82, § 23.
[2] Letter 82, § 26.
[3] Letter 82, § 33.

intention. He asks Jerome's forgiveness for a most unintentional offence. He humbly requests Jerome to correct his mistakes. "For although so far as the titles of honour which prevail in the Church are concerned, a bishop's rank is above that of a presbyter, nevertheless in many things Augustine is inferior to Jerome."

Augustine acknowledges that Jerome has convinced him[1] that it is right to translate the Old Testament from the original Hebrew. But he also asks for a copy of Jerome's translation from the Greek, of the existence of which he was not aware. His only objection to having the translation from the Hebrew read in Church was lest the revised version should cause disturbance among the congregation.

He is replying here[2] to three of Jerome's letters. He promises to take greater precautions in future that his letters may not fall into other hands, before reaching the reader's to whom they are directed. He pleads for perfect frankness of discussion between them. But only if this can be done without endangering brotherly love.

Whether S. Jerome replied to Augustine's interpretation of this incident may be left uncertain. If he did so no trace of the reply survives. But what is certain is that the old student adopted the Bishop's view. Some ten years after this correspondence with Augustine, Jerome wrote his treatise against the Pelagians (A.D. 415). Commenting on the text that a priest or bishop must be blameless, Jerome takes occasion to remark that if S. Paul says that S. Peter walked not rightly in accordance with the truth of the Gospel, and was so far to blame that even Barnabas was carried away by his dissimulation, what person can wonder if he is not credited with that blamelessness which even the chief of the Apostles did not possess?[3]

[1] Letter 82, § 34. [2] Letter 82, § 36.

[3] Jerome's Works, Vallarsi's Edition, II. 702, *Dialogus Contra Pelagianos*, i. 22.

No mention is made of Augustine in this place. But at the close of the whole work the Bishop of Hippo is mentioned by name and in terms of admiration.

Augustine repeated his exposition in his treatise against Falsehood which was probably published after Jerome's death.

The whole story of this disputed interpretation is admirably given in a masterly summary by S. Thomas. He points out that between Augustine and Jerome there were four differences of opinion as to the incident in Galatians.

1. The first difference was, that Jerome distinguished history into two periods: before Christ and afterwards; and held that the Law was beneficial in the former, and disastrous in the latter. Augustine, however, distinguished three periods: (1) Before Christ; (2) immediately after Christ; and (3) the subsequent ages;—and held that the Law was not disastrous in the case of converted Jews in the Apostolic Age, and that there was no sin in its observance, always provided that they did not place their hope of salvation in it. Augustine's reason is, that if the Jews on their conversion had been forbidden all the Mosaic observances, this prohibition would have set the Jewish Law on a level with idolatrous observances.

2. The second difference between Augustine and Jerome concerned the Apostles. Jerome held that the Apostles never in reality observed the Law, but simulated observance in order to avoid giving offence. Thus S. Paul's discharging a vow in the Temple, or circumcising Timothy, or conforming with S. James's directions as to legal customs, was all done from mere motives of diplomacy and expediency and not from a religious spirit. Augustine on the contrary held that the Apostles sincerely meant what they were doing when they conformed to the Mosaic requirement, only they never regarded such observances as in any way necessary to salvation. This attitude was justifiable in a period of transition.

3. The third difference between Augustine and Jerome concerned the conduct of S. Peter. Jerome held that Peter's dissimulation was not a sin because it was not prompted by fear but by charity. Augustine held that it was a sin although a venial one. For Peter unwisely attached himself overmuch to the Jewish side. S. Thomas holds that Augustine's argument is stronger than that of Jerome. For Jerome indeed adduces seven authorities in support of himself. But of these authorities four are questionable because the writers were addicted to heresy. Whereas Augustine, to Jerome's remaining three, produces three others. And Augustine's three defenders are Ambrose, Cyprian and S. Paul himself. For S. Paul said that Peter was to be blamed. That judgment cannot be set aside. The opinion of Augustine is the truer because it agrees with the Apostle's words.

4. The fourth and last difference between Augustine and Jerome is concerned with the action of S. Paul. Jerome said that S. Paul did not really rebuke S. Peter, but only simulated a rebuke. Thus, according to Jerome, there was dissimulation on both sides. Augustine maintained that Peter seriously observed the Law and S. Paul seriously rebuked him ; and that S. Peter sinned in keeping it because he scandalised the Gentiles, while S. Paul did not sin in rebuking him, because no scandal was involved in the rebuke.[1]

The question of the Origin of the Soul was much debated in the Church of the early fifth century. Rufinus, priest of Aquileia, had summarised three distinct theories about it while writing on Origen in 398. Jerome fell on Rufinus, with extraordinary ferocity and scorn, for admitting that he was ignorant which of these theories was true.[2] But, while Jerome severely criticised

[1] S. Thomas, *Comment. in Galat.* Lectio III. Works, Parma Edit. T. XIII. 396.

[2] *Apol. S. Hieron. adv. Lit. Rufini*, ii. 8. Works, I. 497.

another writer in this spirit, he omitted to say which theory he himself maintained. Nevertheless Jerome had written elsewhere, on the words of Ecclesiastes: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7), the following comment: "Hereby they are convinced of folly who think that souls are transmitted together with bodies, and do not come from God but are generated from the bodies of their parents." [1]

Some years after his controversial attack on Rufinus Jerome was requested by persons of distinction in Africa to explain the problem of the Origin of the Soul. Marcellinus, Augustine's friend, the same who presided over the Donatist Conference in 410, had already tried to get the Bishop to solve his difficulties. But Augustine confessed himself unprepared. Thereupon Marcellinus wrote to Jerome, who replied in 412.[2] There were several theories concerning this difficult problem of the soul's origin. It was questioned whether it descended from Heaven, as the Platonists taught and Origen with them; or whether it was part of the substance of God, as the Stoics and Manichæans and the Priscillianists in Spain believed; or whether it was kept in some Divine treasury long ago established, which Jerome thinks a foolish notion; or whether it is created for each separate body and incorporated within it; or whether it is transmitted from parents like the body, as Tertullian, Apollinaris, and the greater part of the Western Church believed.

After enumerating all these perplexing varieties of opinion (which might have been far more simply stated, for the real problem of the period was whether the soul was created or transmitted), Jerome refers his readers to his criticisms against Rufinus, and says that he has given his own opinion there. But as a matter of fact

[1] Works, III. 493. Vallarsi. Verona, 1755.
[2] Letter 165 among Augustine's; Letter 126 among Jerome's.

this is exactly what he has not done. He then advises his correspondent to apply to Augustine, "who will give you his opinion, or rather mine, in his own words." This again was exactly what Augustine would not do: partly because his mind was in suspense, and partly because he leaned towards Traducianism, since he saw that the Creationist theory was hard to reconcile with the doctrine of Original Sin.

Here Jerome left the subject of his letter and went on to speak of his troubles and his studies. He had been engaged in writing a Commentary on Ezekiel. Then came the awful news of the Fall of Rome. Jerome was so overwhelmed by the calamity that, according to the proverb, he hardly knew his own name. He sat long in silence and in tears. Then he roused himself to write part of his Commentary. Then came an outbreak of violence in Palestine and at Bethlehem itself. Jerome himself was in danger, but by the mercy of Christ he was enabled to escape. If laws are suspended in war-time, how much more is the study of Scripture, which requires a multitude of books, and silence, and uninterrupted calm, and the labours of secretaries? However, Jerome has sent a copy of his work to Fabiola, from whom Marcellinus can get it if he wishes.

Jerome adds further details in his Commentary on Ezekiel. There he relates how the Fall of Rome was followed by the appearance of refugees, men and women of the highest rank from Rome, reduced to beggary, hoping at least to find security from the terrors of barbarian invasion in the sacred places of Palestine. Jerome was forced by sheer compassion to lay aside his studies and weep with those that wept. He must, he says, turn Scripture words into deeds, and instead of saying holy things attempt to do them.[1]

Augustine was informed by Marcellinus that he had

[1] Preface to Book III. on Ezekiel. Works, Tom. V. 80.

received Jerome's reply. And this led Augustine himself to write his letter on the subject to Jerome.

The bearer of Augustine's letter was the historian Paul Orosius.

Paul Orosius, a young priest belonging to the Church in Spain, had been sent to Africa to consult Augustine on the heresies of the Priscillianists,[1] which at that time distressed the Spanish Communion. Augustine was impressed by the young priest's earnestness and zeal, and sent him on to Jerome at Bethlehem with a letter.

"Behold a religious young man has come to me,[2] by name Orosius, who is in the bond of Catholic peace a brother, in point of age a son, and in honour a fellow presbyter: a man of quick understanding, ready speech and burning zeal, desiring to be in the Lord's House a vessel rendering useful service in refuting those false and pernicious doctrines, through which the souls of men in Spain have suffered much more grievous wounds than have been afflicted on their bodies by the sword of barbarism. For from the remote western coast of Spain he has come with eager haste to us, having been prompted to do this by the report that from us he could learn whatever he wished on the subjects on which he desired information. Nor has his coming been altogether in vain. In the first place, he has learned not to believe all that report affirmed of me; in the next place, I have taught him all I could, and as for the things in which I could not teach him, I have told him from whom he may learn them, and have exhorted him to go on to you."[3]

With this letter of introduction Orosius visited S. Jerome at Bethlehem.

The doctrines concerning the soul[4] which Augustine regarded as incontestable were as follows:—

[1] *cf.* S. Leo, Letter 15.
[2] *cf.* S. Augustine, Letter 166, A.D. 415.
[3] S. Augustine, Letter 166.
[4] Letter 166, § 3.

1. The soul is immortal.
2. The soul is not a part of God.
3. The soul is immaterial.
4. The soul is sinful and fallen.
5. The soul cannot deliver itself.
6. The soul's salvation depends on our Redeemer.
7. The soul's redemption can only be secured by Baptismal Regeneration.

These doctrines being regarded as fundamental[1] and beyond dispute, the problem is: Whence has the soul contracted guilt of original sin, guilt from which it can only be delivered by the sacrament of Christian Grace?

Augustine tells Jerome that in his treatise on Free will (which appeared in A.D. 395 and had been widely circulated), four different opinions were mentioned concerning the Origin of the Soul—

1. That all other souls are derived from the soul of Adam.
2. That at each birth a new soul is created.
3. That pre-existing souls are sent into each new human body.
4. That pre-existing souls enter new bodies of their own accord.

Augustine enumerates these four opinions. But in reality he reduces them to two: Either the soul is transmitted, and exists prior to the body; or else the soul is created simultaneously with the body. The two alternative theories are called Traducianism and Creationism.

To appreciate the letter before us and Augustine's interest in the problem, it must be remembered that he was now in the thick of the Pelagian controversy. The problem of Original Sin confronted him. The doctrine of Original Sin was obviously greatly affected by the question of the Origin of the Soul. If the soul of each new child was transmitted from the soul of the primitive

[1] Letter 166, § 6.

man the share of the race in the losses of Adam was intelligible. But if the soul of each new child was newly created, then the body alone was inherited but not the spiritual nature. How then could a newly created soul become contaminated by moral evil with which it was in no way whatever connected? Therefore Augustine's decided preference was for the theory of Traducianism. But he finds that Jerome has in his writings advocated Creationist ideas. He discusses the Creationist theory, and explains what he conceives to be its strong points and also its difficulties.

Jerome maintained, then, that a new soul is created at each human birth.

If it was objected to this, that at the Creation God finished His work and rested, Jerome would refer to Christ's words, "My Father worketh hitherto." That was what Jerome told Marcellinus (*cf.* Letter 165). Marcellinus had found Augustine unwilling to be dogmatic on the subject, and therefore wrote to Jerome for something more decided. Jerome, however, referred him back to Augustine. Augustine now tells Jerome frankly that he is in a state of indecision on this problem.

"You have sent to me scholars, to whom you wish me to impart what I have not yet learned myself. Teach me, therefore, what I am to teach them; for many urge me vehemently to be a teacher on this subject, and to them I confess that of this, as well as of many other things, I am ignorant."

Supposing, then, Creationism to be the true theory, can Jerome explain why infants require remission of sin in the Sacrament of Christ? Or, if there is no sin in them, why are infants who die unbaptised excluded from salvation? That was Augustine's difficulty, created by the traditional belief: which was not only the positive affirmation that the baptised are saved, but the negative affirmation that the unbaptised are lost. How can this exclusion from salvation of the infant dying unbaptised

be harmonised with the justice of God? That was the problem as it struck Augustine and his contemporaries. Augustine held (1) that the fate of an infant dying unbaptised is perdition, (2) but also that God cannot punish the innocent. Consequently he was bound to ask what is the proof that Creationism is true.

Augustine agrees with Jerome[1] that the Creationist theory of the soul's origin is by no means refuted from the text that God finished His work at the Creation. The Creation was the bringing into existence that which had none. But the text, "My Father worketh hitherto," means that God continues to fashion pre-existing material. Thus Genesis and S. John's Gospel do not contradict but agree.[2] It is undeniable that God continues to make at the present time many things which did not exist before.

Another objection against Creationism[3] was that in the case of an illegitimate birth this theory makes God create a soul in response to human sin. Jerome's answer was that nature need not refuse to mature the wheat because the grain was stolen. Augustine commended this answer. He felt that the method of Providence was constantly out of ill to bring forth good.

But there are difficulties in the Creationist theory which Augustine owns he is unable to solve.

He was profoundly moved by the sufferings of infants in the present life.[4] But he sees that this may turn to good account in the parents, whose power of compassion may be developed in this way (§ 18), and who may be chastened through this means (*cf.* § 13). Faith may also leave the problem unsolved in the hands of Providence (*ib.*). Moreover, who can tell what recompense God may reserve in the after life for these afflictions? (§ 18).[5] Augustine quotes from his discussion of this subject in his treatise on Free Will.

[1] Letter 166, § 11.
[2] Letter 166, § 12.
[3] Letter 166, § 15.
[4] Letter 166, § 16.
[5] Letter 166, § 18.

All this, however, can only apply to infants who will hereafter be saved.[1] It is no answer to the problem of those who die unbaptised and will be lost.[2] Now no man can be redeemed except in Christ. To say that children who depart this life without the Sacrament of Baptism shall nevertheless be made alive in Christ, is, in Augustine's view, to contradict the Apostolic teaching, and to condemn the practice of the Universal Church. It was certain that no one could be saved unless made alive in Christ. And Augustine saw no possibility of their being made alive except through the Sacrament of Baptism. He seems to have held not only that the Church is tied to observance of Christ's Ordinance and cannot confer life except through the Sacrament, but also that Christ Himself is so bound to the Sacrament as to be unable to confer the gift except through the outward means. Grant His premises and his logic is irreproachable. And those premises are no doubt what Jerome would have granted.

Thus the difficulties of Creationism remain unsolved.

This letter to Jerome was followed by another,[3] in which Augustine asked to be told what was the meaning of the passage in S. James ii. 10: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." The letter is a lengthy disquisition on the idea that virtues must co-exist, and that all sins are not of equal gravity.

These two treatises of Augustine, the one on the Origin of the Soul, the other on the Teaching of S. James (Letters 166 and 167), arrived safely at Bethlehem.

Jerome replied in a highly laudatory but curiously cautious and reserved epistle,[4] in which he announces that Orosius has arrived and has been received in accordance with Augustine's request. But they have fallen on hard times, wherein silence is better than speech. Study is at an end. They are leading a dog's

[1] Letter 166, § 20.
[2] Letter 166, § 21.
[3] Letter 167.
[4] Letter 172, A.D. 416.

life at Bethlehem. It seems as if Jerome, who had plenty to say about recent Pelagian movements in Palestine and the character of Bishop John of Jerusalem, thought it more prudent not to commit himself to writing. He preferred to send the news by messenger when Orosius returned. Jerome has received the two treatises which Augustine sent him. They are very learned and brilliantly eloquent. But Jerome is not able to reply. "Not," says the old student, "that he finds anything meriting rebuke in them, but that every man has his own opinion." Augustine has produced all the available Scripture evidence on the subject which he discusses. But Jerome would rather be permitted to praise the Bishop's ability. Moreover it would never do to let envious people and, above all, heretical people, see difference of opinion between Augustine and Jerome. Jerome is resolved to be devotedly attached to Augustine, to venerate him, and to defend Augustine's utterances as if they were his own. Jerome informs Augustine that he has given the Bishop an honourable mention in a treatise lately published against the Pelagians (Book III. 19). It is urgently necessary that Augustine and Jerome should combine to drive out this most deadly heresy from the Church. Pelagianism is always pretending penitence in order to retain the right to teach within the Church. It is afraid to be brought out into the light, for fear it should be expelled or perish.

Jerome closes with various salutations, and adds a postscript to the effect that he cannot send Augustine his critical Latin text of the Old Testament, because transcribers familiar with Latin are scarce in Palestine.

The problem of the Origin of the Soul is discussed by Augustine in a letter[1] written to Bishop Optatus from Cæsarea, in Mauritania, whither he had been sent by Pope Zosimus on some business connected with the Roman See.

[1] Letter 190, A.D. 418.

Starting with facts beyond dispute, Augustine says that the soul is not body, but spirit; not part of God, but created.

Then he raises the grave problem: Why God created souls whose destiny, as He foreknew, would be perdition. Augustine here gives expression to his Predestinarian theories. If God had only created souls who would be redeemed no concrete illustration would have existed of the state from which redemption delivered men. There would only be illustrated what the redeemed enjoyed but not what they escaped. The full benefit of Redemption would be concealed from lack of examples.

Augustine went further than this. He thought that the number[1] of the lost would immeasurably exceed that of the redeemed. And this belief does not appear to have disturbed him. Their destiny was just, and God was not concerned about their numbers.

There was only one way out of damnation, this was the Sacrament of the Mediator.[2]

But here the problem of the Origin of the Soul comes in.[3] For, as Pelagius argued, if each soul is a separate creation, and the body only is derived from Adam, how could the soul be condemned by the mere entrance into the body? But if the soul is transmitted to the child from its parents, how can it be responsible for another person's sin? And how can God, Who forgives our actual transgressions, impute to us a sin which we personally never committed?

Here Augustine speaks with characteristic humility and caution. No man must be ashamed to confess his ignorance, lest by professing to know what he does not know he dooms himself to perpetual ignorance.[4] In questions whose inherent obscurity surpasses our powers, and where Scripture does not come to our aid, it is only rashness for human presumption to define.

[1] Letter 190, § 11.
[2] Letter 190, § 13.
[3] Letter 190, §§ 14 and 15.
[4] Letter 190, § 16.

Nothing certain can be ascertained from Scripture concerning the origin of individual souls.[1] Augustine refers to his previous correspondence with Jerome, who held the Creationist view; while Traducianism was the opinion of the Western Church.[2]

Augustine desires his writing on the subject to be taken as the work of an inquirer, not of a teacher. He declines to dogmatise. But he is obviously more disposed to believe that each soul is transmitted rather than a fresh creation, since the Traducianist theory agrees with the doctrine of Original Sin, and with the Pauline doctrine that by man came death, and that in Adam all die.

Meanwhile he falls back on the declaration of Pope Zosimus where the Traducian theory is maintained, and the doctrine reaffirmed that there is no deliverance except through the Mediator, and that deliverance is only conferred upon the baptised.[3]

After all, it is better that the problem of the Origin of Souls should remain obscure than that God should be supposed the author of sin, or that the baptism of infants should be regarded as meaningless.[4]

Towards the close of A.D. 419, Jerome wrote to Augustine[5] another letter, which he sent by the presbyter Innocent who was to have carried letters to Africa from Palestine the year before, but failed. Jerome writes this time in an amiable mood. He is always glad, he says, of a reason for writing to Augustine. If it were possible he would take the wings of a dove and fly to Africa. Alypius and Augustine are to accept his congratulations because by their efforts the Celestian heresy has been throttled. It has been a widespread and deadly poison. Jerome announces the death of the lady Eustochia. He speaks with profound

[1] Letter 190, § 17.
[2] Letter 190, § 20. (See Letters 143, 165, 166.)
[3] Letter 190, § 23.
[4] Letter 190, § 24.
[5] Letter 202, A.D. 419.

disgust of the miserable Synod of Diospolis (*i.e.* the Palestinian Council, in which the Bishops were misled by the plausible profession of the Pelagians). Jerome sends greetings from Albina, Pinian and Melania (whose visit to Africa in 411 had led to the sensational scene in the Church at Hippo: see Letter 124). Paula also greets him.

In the year 420 Augustine wrote to Optatus, Bishop of Milevis,[1] telling him that the letters sent to Jerome cannot be published at present, since there is still hope that Jerome may send an explanation of the problems concerning the Origin of the Soul. Five years, indeed, have elapsed since Augustine wrote to Bethlehem, but he has not abandoned hope that an answer may yet arrive. He tells Optatus the contents of Jerome's brief reply, and points out that there is no refusal to consider the subjects set before him. Consequently Augustine must wait. He cannot publish his letter yet. To do that would give reasonable ground for complaint. Jerome might think him actuated by motives of self-display, rather than by serious desire to ascertain the truth.

Augustine infers from Jerome's letter that his friend does not decline his inquiries; that he is well-disposed towards him; and was anxious to avoid the appearance of public controversy between them. He hopes the result will be that his successors will see how brothers in affection may dispute on a difficult question and yet preserve each other's esteem. Augustine writes with discretion. The rugged old student of Bethlehem required to be carefully dealt with.

Meanwhile Augustine has much to say to Optatus. For Optatus has been criticising adversely those who maintain the Traducianist theory of the soul's origin. Augustine frankly owns: "I must admit I have so far

[1] Letter 202 B., p. 1146. (This letter is among Jerome's, No. 144. Works, I. 1062.)

failed to discover how the soul can derive its sin from Adam (a truth which it is unlawful to question) and yet not itself be derived from Adam. At present I think it better to sift the matter further than to dogmatise rashly."

Therefore he would be glad to know what scriptural basis Optatus can find for rejecting the Traducian theory. If Traducianism is rejected, it becomes necessary to explain how a soul is provided for the body. Is it a separate creation? For doubtless Optatus does not credit the theory of transmigration, which Origen and Priscillian taught, that souls have pre-existed in a former world and are placed in the body in accordance with their deserving. That theory is refuted by the scripture which says that Jacob and Esau before their birth had done neither good nor evil.

If Optatus has scripture testimonies to produce against Traducianism would he let Augustine have them? Traducianism does not imply, as Optatus seems to think, that God is not the Creator of the soul, any more than it does in the case of the body. Optatus admits that Traducianism has been held by some of his predecessors. Augustine would be glad to know upon what grounds they founded their belief.

Meanwhile of course hesitation and uncertainty are justified. It is curious to contrast Augustine here with Jerome's reckless and reasonless contempt of Rufinus for hesitating between the opposing views.

Augustine says: "Now when we have reason to be doubtful about a point, we need not doubt that we are right in doubting. There is no doubt that we ought to doubt things that are doubtful" (§ 8). Augustine illustrates S. Paul's doubtfulness whether it was in the body or out of the body that he was carried up into the third heaven. "Why may not I then, so long as I have no light, doubt whether my soul came to me by generation or unengendered? Christ said of certain matters, 'It is not for you to know.' What if Christ, Who

knows what is expedient for us, knows this knowledge not to be expedient?"

Hence, as at present advised, Augustine is unable to decide. Meanwhile he restates his own perplexity. It is this: "Can a soul derive original sin from a source from which it is not itself derived?" (§ 10). There is Augustine's real interest in the problem of the soul's origin: its bearing on the Pelagian Controversy.

This letter to Optatus was written in 420. This year is said to have been the year of Jerome's death.

Jerome's death removed any need for delay in publishing Augustine's own letters. The Bishop now freely circulated them.[1]

[1] See *Retract.* II. 45.

CHAPTER VIII

LETTERS TO WOMEN

AUGUSTINE'S "Letters to Women" may well be grouped together, because they help to illustrate the position occupied by women in Church Life at the close of the fourth century and beginning of the fifth.

They were written to Ecdicia, a married woman; to Sapida, a religious; to Maxima, to Seleuciana, to a studious girl, Florentina; to Italica, on the Vision of God; to Melania, a refugee in Africa after the Fall of Rome; to Proba, widow of the Consul; to Juliana, widowed mother of the religious Demetrias; to Paulina on the Vision of God; to Felicitas, Prioress of a Convent; to a religious Community of Women; to Fabiola.

There is an impressive letter written by Augustine[1] to Ecdicia, a married woman who had alienated her husband. She desired to live with him as a sister and not as a wife. To this proposal she had induced him to consent. She then insisted on dressing like a widow, or in a costume appropriate to one who has no husband at all. To this he objected. She went further still, and without consulting him gave away his possessions in alms to two monks. On discovering what she was doing he made some furious remarks on monks, abandoned her, and went to live with another woman.

She then applied to Augustine. If she expected approval of her conduct she was entirely mistaken. He tells her that she was wrong in the first instance because

[1] Letter 262.

she lived with her husband as a sister and not as a wife, while he was reluctant that it should be so. No such manner of life is lawful for married persons unless by their own mutual consent. Augustine refers her to S. Paul's teaching on the duties of the married (in 1 Cor. viii. 1–17), which he insinuates she has either not heard or not realised. He maintains that if by mutual consent a vow of self-restraint has been taken, it ought, being a mutual self-dedication to God, to be kept perseveringly. But he only gives this advice on the understanding that consent has been given. Otherwise the married woman is absolutely prohibited from registering any such determination.

Augustine then proceeds to deal with the duty of humility and obedience in domestic life. She was entirely wrong to offend her husband in matters of dress. She was quite wrong again in giving away his possessions in alms to the monks—without his knowledge or consent. She has deprived her husband of sharing in charitable deeds to which if she had acted otherwise she might have gently led him. Augustine asks her whether any person's temporal advantage is more precious to her than her husband's eternal advantage. If she had been more considerate, would she not rather have postponed her gifts to the poor lest she scandalised her husband and caused him to recoil from religion? Let her only think what she would have gained if she had gained her husband. Which is the greater: to break one's bread to the hungry or to deliver a soul from the devil?

Augustine contends that a married woman has no right to say "I will do what I will with my own." That was contrary to S. Peter's teaching (1 Pet. iii. 5–6).

Moreover there was the child to be considered. A mother has no right to give away in charity what would become the property of her son. Augustine reminds her of the apostolic words: "If any provideth not for his own, and especially his own household, he hath

denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. v. 8).

Augustine tries to enable her to realise that it was not unnatural that her husband should object to her dressing like a widow while he was alive.

The Bishop concludes by exhorting her very earnestly to be humble-minded, to care lest her husband perish, to pray for her husband, to write to him and ask his forgiveness because she has sinned against him, and to promise in future that if he will keep his vow of self-restraint, she will serve him in all things. Meantime there is no need to tell her that her son is rather in his father's control than in hers.

Sapida was a woman dedicated to the religious life.[1] When her brother died she sent a tunic which had belonged to him as a present to Augustine.

Augustine accepted it, and writes to say that he is wearing it, in deference to Sapida's request; since she says it would be a comfort to her, and he does not wish to hurt her feelings. But Augustine never liked people to make him presents which would in any way distinguish him from other people.

In one of his sermons[2] he explained his reasons for this. Costly robes were sometimes sent him as suitable to his episcopal position. "But it is not becoming for Augustine," he said, "who is poor, and who is the son of poor parents. Would you have men say that in the Church I found means to obtain richer clothing than I could in my father's house, or in the pursuit of secular employment? That would be a shame to me."

He went on to tell the congregation that if such gifts were sent they would be sold for the benefit of the Community. "I assure you that a costly dress makes me blush, because it is not in harmony with my profession, or with such exhortations as I now give you,

[1] Letter 263.

[2] Sermon 356.

and ill becomes one whose frame is bent, and whose locks are whitened, as you see, by age."

A lady named Maxima wrote to Augustine[1] complaining that erroneous doctrine was being taught in her neighbourhood. The letter does not say where she lived. She was apparently presiding over others in a religious Community. The erroneous doctrine was clearly concerning the Incarnation. Augustine assures her that what she holds is true: namely, that the Son of God took human nature complete, that is, both a rational soul and mortal flesh, without sin. If she possesses any writings which contradict this faith Augustine asks her to send them to him. False doctrines are frequently based on misunderstandings of Scripture. And it is most important that the erroneous character of such interpretations should be demonstrated. If Maxima wishes to possess any of Augustine own writings let her send a messenger for copies of them.

A lady named Seleuciana had encountered a supporter[2] of the austere Novatianist theory that while the repentance of the unbaptised could be accepted by the Church, no such concession could be made in the case of deadly sins committed after Baptism. This follower of Novatian held that S. Peter's penance for his denial of Christ was the act of an unbaptised person.

Augustine replies that it is true that when Peter denied our Lord the Apostle had not yet been baptised with the Holy Spirit. For our Lord Himself said to them after His Resurrection, "Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

But if we say that the Apostles had not yet been baptised with water, we may be encouraging men to disparage Baptism, which the apostolic practice shows to be a deplorable error, since S. Peter expressly ordered Cornelius, who had received the Holy Spirit, to be baptised.

[1] Letter 264. [2] Letter 265.

Augustine accordingly maintains that the case of Baptism was similar to that of Circumcision. Both became essential only after they were divinely ordained. But after that Christ had taught that except a man be born of water and of the Holy Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, it is not necessary to ascertain the precise date of an individual's baptism. The very fact that persons are within the Body of Christ, that is, the Church, and belonging to the Kingdom of Heaven, and their very position shows that they are baptised. The only exception to this is the case where persons overtaken by martyrdom had no opportunity to be baptised. In which case their passion is to be considered equivalent. But that exception is inapplicable to the Apostles. Those who had plenty of time to baptise others had time themselves to be baptised. But not everything that was transacted is recorded. The baptism of S. Paul is recorded. That of the other Apostles is not. But that they were baptised ought not to be doubted, because it is required by Christ's command.

The disciples were already baptised with the Baptism of S. John Baptist. So many think. Or was it not the Baptism of Christ which they received? Augustine thinks this more credible. He thinks that Christ Himself baptised the Apostles. He who washed their feet would not shrink from this ministration, in order that His servants, through whom He baptised others, should themselves be baptised. This seems implied in Christ's words to S. Peter: "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (John xiii. 10). To Augustine's mind that shows that S. Peter was already baptised.

When this adherent of Novatian maintains, as Seleuciana reports, that the Apostles taught penitence not Baptism, he is not intelligible. Penitence is a condition of Baptism. But it is necessary for sin after Baptism as well as before it.

If he means that the Apostles substituted repentance for Baptism, and that the repentant were not baptised, Augustine is not aware that any Novatianists say so. Seleuciana should inquire carefully whether this is being maintained. Perhaps the disputer is not a Novatianist at all, or only thinks he is. In any case what is certain is, that the theory is foreign to the rule of Catholic faith, and to the teachings of Christ and His Apostles.

There is extant a letter from Augustine[1] to a studious girl offering to help her in her studies. He had corresponded with Florentina's mother and desired to encourage the daughter in religious learning. He hears that Florentina did not like to write unless the Bishop wrote and gave permission. Augustine assures her that he will do his best to answer any questions she may send him. If the Bishop knows the answer he will send it. If he does not know, and the ignorance is not detrimental to faith and safety, he will if he can set her mind at rest. If it is a matter which he does not know, and yet which ought to be known, he will pray for enlightenment, that he may not fail her ; and will reply in such terms that she may know in matters where both are ignorant to whom they both must look for understanding.

A very curious light is thrown on African Church life[2] in the letters written to Pinian and Melania. Melania was heiress of one of the wealthiest houses in Rome, and had lived with her husband, Pinian, in one of its finest palaces, until the calamitous invasion of the Goths under Alaric in 410. Like many others of the Roman aristocracy she took refuge in Africa, where also she had large estates. Here she sold much of her property and gave away lavishly to the Churches and Monasteries and the poor, especially in Thagaste, where she lived in religious austerity, and where Alypius, Augustine's friend, was

[1] Letter 266. [2] Letter 124, A.D. 411.

Bishop. Augustine wrote to Melania and Pinian welcoming them into Africa and excusing himself from paying them a visit: advancing years prevented him from facing the rigorous winter which his weak and sensitive constitution was at no time able to bear. Even if that had not been the case his restless and turbulent people would not permit his absence. The result of this letter was, that Pinian and Melania, together with Bishop Alypius, paid a visit to Augustine at Hippo. Hereupon followed an extraordinary scene. The Catholics of Hippo were assembled in Church when these distinguished visitors, whose reputation had preceded them, entered the building. As soon as they were recognised the people shouted to Augustine, calling on him to ordain Pinian to the priesthood. It seems that Augustine had anticipated the possible rise of some such disturbance, for he immediately informed the people, as soon as he could make himself heard, that he had promised Pinian not to ordain him against his will; adding that if his promise were broken the people might have Pinian as their presbyter, but they would no longer have Augustine as their bishop. That warning subdued the people for a moment. But they soon broke out more fiercely than before. Pinian was terrified. Augustine feared for the safety of his visitors. The wildness of the African nature was roused. Every moment Augustine expected this fanatical outburst might end in murder. Augustine stood in helpless indecision. He dared not leave the Church for fear of danger to his guests. But he was perfectly powerless to protect them. Meanwhile the people turned furiously on Bishop Alypius, and accused him of frustrating their demand through sordid motives, and only because he wanted to retain a rich man in his congregation at Thagaste. In the midst of this outrageous confusion Pinian sent a messenger to Augustine, to say that if he was ordained against his will he swore that he would depart from Africa. But Augustine had not the

courage to tell the people this. He sent no answer, and in his perplexity consulted Alypius, who washed his hands of the whole affair and replied "Don't ask me." Thereupon Augustine obtained silence and informed the people. They immediately demanded that Pinian should promise that he would reside at Hippo, and that if he were ordained at all it should be for that Church. To this demand Pinian yielded. With Augustine's consent he vowed that he would keep this engagement. Peace was then restored and the congregation dispersed.

But peace was not secured beyond the precincts. Pinian and Melania and their relatives made serious accusations of sordid motives against Augustine's people if not against Augustine himself.

But the most singular part of the incident is Augustine's defence.[1] He insisted with the utmost solemnity that the promise must be kept. He admitted that it was made under the influence of fear; none the less he appealed to the example of the Pagan Regulus, who swore to the Carthaginian that he would rebel, and kept his oath, although its fulfilment meant torture and death. Augustine quoted the Psalm "he that sweareth unto his neighbour and disappointeth him not." Augustine urged that unless he and Alypius required the fulfilment of this promise they must not expect any man to credit their promises any more. He insisted that an awful Divine retribution would follow on perjury, and prayed that from such temptations Providence would deliver them. He allowed no weight to the terrorising influence of a fanatical African people, although he confessed that at the time he fully expected that some one would be murdered before the day was done. He repudiated indignantly the sordid construction which had been placed upon the conduct of his people.

One of the wealthiest and most distinguished families

[1] Letter 125.

in Rome about the year 400 was the family of Proba. She was widow of a Consul. Three of her sons attained to consular dignity. Jerome said that this was a dignity which hardly any one of her family missed.[1] The family is commemorated in the poems of Prudentius. Her husband was baptised when near his death and buried near the apse of S. Peter at the Vatican.[2] Proba was the mother of Juliana, whose daughter Demetrias set the example, to the astonishment of Rome, of taking the veil early in the fifth century. Proba was in correspondence with most of the great Churchmen of the time, including Jerome, Chrysostom and Augustine. Chrysostom wrote commending to her care a priest and deacon who had travelled to Rome. This was in 406.[3]

But in 410 came the sack of Rome by Alaric. Proba and Juliana and Demetrias took flight to Africa. As they were setting sail they could see the smoke of the burning city. They reached Africa safely, but Heraclian, Count of Africa, an avaricious and unscrupulous person, extorted a great sum from them before allowing them to settle in security.[4]

Jerome has given a graphic description of Demetrias professing the religious life. How she dressed herself in coarse attire and went to her mother and grandmother and confessed her wish to take the veil; how both these religious women wept for gladness. Jerome here grows eloquent in the fervour of his approval. "Every Church in Africa danced for joy. The news reached not only the cities, towns and villages, but even the scattered huts. Every island between Africa and Italy was full of it; the glad tidings ran far and wide, disliked by none. Then Italy put off her mourning, and the ruined walls of Rome resumed in part

[1] Jerome, Letter, 130.
[2] Baronius, A.D. 395, § 6. Vol. vi. 163.
[3] Chrysostom, Letter 168. Works, Ed. Gaume, III. 840.
[4] Jerome, Letter 130.

their olden splendour; for they believed the full conversion of their foster-child to be a sign of God's favour towards them."

Proba being now settled in Africa sought Augustine's advice on the subject of prayer.

Augustine accordingly sent her a letter of spiritual direction.[1]

The Letter is divided into two parts: first, concerning the person who prays; secondly, concerning the objects for which prayer should be made.

As concerning the person,[2] Augustine dwells on the obstacles to religious life, caused by wealth, of which Proba was so conspicuous a possessor.[3] Then on the fact that all human life is desolate, whatever be its earthly condition, until it finds its real life in Christ. Proba must learn to regard all earthly possessions with indifference,[4] seeking nothing from them but bodily health. And this is to be sought because it qualifies us to discharge life's work.

As concerning the object for which prayer should be made,[5] Augustine sums this up in the advice to pray for a happy life. And if asked what constitutes happiness, he replies that it does not consist in gratifying our own will and desires. (This is one of the subjects which Augustine discussed in the villa outside Milan in the early days after his Conversion, *De beata Vita*.) Here he supports his teaching with a quotation from Cicero.

True happiness consists in possession of all we desire,[6] provided that we desire nothing but what we ought. Desire for the health of those we love is right, but it does not constitute happiness.

May we also desire distinction and power for them?[7] Yes, if we desire it in order that they may minister

[1] Letter 130.
[2] Letter 130, § 2.
[3] Letter 130, § 4.
[4] Letter 130, § 7.
[5] Letter 130, § 9.
[6] Letter 130, § 11.
[7] Letter 130, § 12.

to others. But if we desire it out of pride and arrogance it is disastrous. He appeals to Prov. xxx. 8–9 for the superior safety of those whose lot is neither wealth nor poverty.

But the secret of a happy life lies in no external possessions,[1] or temporal state. The secret of happiness is life in God.

Prayer should be concentrated on the effort to acquire this life in God.[2] It must be persistent and persevering. Christ's illustration is of the importunate widow.

This prayer must be offered in faith and hope and love.[3] It is offered not with the purpose of giving God information,[4] but for the development of our spiritual powers.

Prayer must be continuous[5] as a spirit of aspiration, finding expression in words at stated seasons.

The value of prayer does not in any way depend upon its length.[6] Yet it is neither wrong nor unprofitable to spend much time in prayer, provided that this does not interfere with our performance of our duties and good works.

Augustine relates that the brethren in Egypt were accustomed to brief frequent petitions, attention being awakened and fixed for the moment.[7] This was found to be a remedy against inattention and wandering thoughts. He gives advice which shows great knowledge of human limitations. Prolonged prayer is desirable if the mind is capable of continuous attention. Prolonged prayer is rather a mental attitude than a use of words. It is very different from "much speaking." It is rather a state than an utterance. At the same time of course words are necessary.

And here Augustine gives a summary[8] of the meaning of the Lord's Prayer.

[1] Letter 130, § 14.
[2] Letter 130, § 15.
[3] Letter 130, § 16.
[4] Letter 130, § 17.
[5] Letter 130, § 18.
[6] Letter 130, § 19.
[7] Letter 130, § 20.
[8] Letter 130, § 21.

All truly Christian petition is included, Augustine maintains,[1] in the clauses of the Lord's Prayer. Any petition which cannot be harmonised with that Prayer is carnal even if it is not unlawful. Indeed, it must be unlawful, since those who are born again of the Spirit must offer spiritual petitions. We may of course use other words beside the Prayer but the substance must be the same.

As to the persons in whose behalf prayer is made,[2] these are ourselves, our friends, strangers and enemies.

When S. Paul said we know not what to pray for as we ought[3] (Rom. viii. 26), he is not betraying ignorance of the Lord's Prayer, but acknowledging ignorance which may be spiritually expedient for us. Thus his own prayer for deliverance from the thorn in the flesh was not granted in the form in which it was offered. All Christian prayer must be conditioned by the proviso which Christ uttered in Gethsemane. There is so much that we do not know.

Accordingly there is a certain *docta ignorantia*.[4] But it is an ignorance instructed by the Spirit of God.

The letter concludes with a request that Augustine may be aided by Proba's prayers.[5]

The letter to the lady Italica[6] ought to be placed in a collection of spiritual letters. It is concerned with the Vision of God, and with the correction of misconceptions about it. The Vision of God[7] is for the mind, not for the bodily eye. It is a case of mental apprehension, not of physical discernment. The objects of physical vision must occupy space. But God does not comply with this condition. He dwells "in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. vi. 16). He is not accessible to bodily

[1] Letter 130, § 22.
[2] Letter 130, § 23.
[3] Letter 130, § 25.
[4] Letter 130, § 28.
[5] Letter 130, § 31.
[6] Letter 130, § 62, A.D. 408.
[7] Letter 130, § 3.

sight, but He is accessible to mental vision. "We shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). But then this vision depends on resemblance to Him. "We shall therefore see Him according to the measure in which we shall be like Him." This likewise is not bodily but spiritual. When the Apostle says we shall see God "face to face," the seeing is not physical. God has not a face like ours.

Numerous misconceptions prevailed[1] in the popular fifth-century theories about the Vision of God. It was held, for example, that while in this life we see God with our minds, in the next we shall see Him with our bodily eyes; and that not only the good but also the evil will see Him.

To this Augustine answers that, according to the Beatitudes, it is the pure in heart who shall see God. The text, "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face," is not a contrast between mental vision and physical, but between two degrees of mental vision. All Vision of God is mental.

A curious dilemma was propounded in popular discussions. The question was put: Was Christ able to see the Father with His bodily eyes, or not? If not, then God is not omnipotent. If yes, then so shall we be able in the future life.

Augustine replies by asking why this question should be confined to the sense of sight? Why not apply the same inquiry to the other senses of Christ? Why not inquire whether Christ heard God with His bodily ear? Is God, then, to be a sound as well as a sight? The theorist recoiled from this application. Well, then, it is no detraction from the Divine omnipotence that God is essentially invisible to the bodily eye.

This great subject, the Vision of God,[2] is further expounded in a letter written for the edification of a lady named Paulina. It is a treatise in itself, and a subject

[1] Letter 130, § 4. [2] Letter 147.

which enables the writer to reveal the depth of his own spiritual experience, and the principles which govern all personal relation between God and man. It is, as he says, a subject which must be known by experience rather than by discussion. Those who have learned from our Lord Jesus Christ to be meek and lowly in heart make progress rather by thought and prayer than by reading and hearing. Not indeed that instruction has no further place; but that when he who plants or waters has done his task,[1] he must leave the rest to Him Who gives the increase. Meantime the reader must not accept instruction on Augustine's authority, but either because the instruction is verified by Scripture,[2] or verified by the reader's inward experience.

All knowledge comes to us either through the avenues of the senses, or by the inferences of the mind.[3] We see by the eyes of the body, we see also by the eyes of the mind. The material world is the object of the former sight; will, memory, understanding, intelligence, are the objects of the latter. There is another sphere ascertainable neither by bodily nor by mental vision, namely, the sphere of things accessible only by faith.

This sphere of faith is very large indeed.[4] Without it we could neither know the existence of cities we have never visited, nor of the historic incidents before our time. Nor could we know who were our parents and who are our relatives except for the exercise of faith. Faith is the method of ascertaining these as well as the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ. The correlative of faith is the authority of the testifier; and if confidence is at times misplaced, it is none the less an inevitable principle of human existence.

The objects accessible to sight are things present; the objects of faith are things absent.[5]

[1] Letter 147, § 1.
[2] Letter 147, § 2.
[3] Letter 147, § 4.
[4] Letter 147, § 5.
[5] Letter 147, § 7.

Thus our knowledge consists of things seen and things believed.[1] "On whom though now ye see him not, yet believing."[2] "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed." Things may be seen either by the eyes of the body or by the eyes of the mind. But the objects of faith are those which are neither seen by the eyes of the body, nor by those of the mind. Hence, then, we understand what it is to see, and what it is to believe.

Apply this to the Vision of God. We know that God can be seen, for it is written, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."[3] And "we shall see him as he is."[4] Yet "no man hath seen God at any time."[5] "Whom no man hath seen nor can see."[6] Yet "their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

What is the explanation of these? Augustine thinks we had better refer to that great exponent of Scripture, S. Ambrose.[7] It is the nature of God to be invisible, yet He manifests Himself to whom He wills. But the plenitude of His Divinity cannot be comprehended.[8]

He can be revealed through Christ to the human mind. A manifestation of Him can be given, but His essential nature cannot be seen. When it is said that the pure in heart shall see God, the meaning is that inward preparation qualifies men to be recipients of Divine manifestations and enables them to realise God's Presence. Thus is it true that no man hath seen God at any time:[9] that is to say, as He is in His essential being. On the other hand, "He that hath seen me

[1] Letter 147, § 8.
[2] 1 Pet. i. 8.
[3] Matt. v. 8.
[4] 1 John iii. 2.
[5] John i. 18.
[6] 1 Tim. vi. 16.
[7] Letter 147, § 17.
[8] Letter 147, § 22.
[9] Letter 147, § 29.

hath seen the Father," because Christ is the Revelation of the Father.

The whole subject is summed up in such terms as the following.[1] If you ask whether God can be seen, I answer yes. If you ask how I know this, I reply because the Scripture says: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." If you ask how He can be called invisible if He can be seen, I answer He is invisible by nature, but He can be seen when and as He wills.

Augustine here is moved to give a warning on the danger of all theological discussions. While we debate how God can possibly be seen, we may lose the disposition, the sanctified spirit,[2] without which it is impossible to see Him. Yet the intellectual study of these problems concerning God is essential. For the localising and the materialising of God are most dangerous to true religion. It makes the greatest difference whether we hold concerning God what is contrary to fact and truth. And the effort to convert body into spirit is endurable, but not that of converting spirit into body. Now God is Spirit, not body. Our bodily eyes cannot see Him now, and never will. He must be seen, when He is seen, by the spirit, and not by the body.

This raises the question of the change which will pass over the human body in the Resurrection.[3] However spiritualised the body will become it will not cease to be body. It will not be converted into spirit.

Again he appeals to S. Ambrose's teaching. And not without a half apology,[4] assuring his correspondent that his regard for Ambrose is not simply due to the fact that the Bishop of Milan's teaching was the providential means of his deliverance from error, nor simply because through Ambrose's ministry he received the

[1] Letter 147, § 37.
[2] Letter 147, § 49.
[3] Letter 147, §§ 50 and 51. *Cf.* p. 193 *f.* and 208.
[4] Letter 147, § 52.

saving Baptismal Grace; but because of the intrinsic value of Ambrose's instructions.

Proba and Juliana sent Augustine a gift to commemorate Demetrias's taking the veil (*velationis apophoretum*). He replied in a letter of congratulation,[1] which, for its brevity and contents, is a remarkable contrast to Jerome's effusive and redundant epistle. None the less Augustine agreed with Jerome in his estimate of the religious life. He hopes that those who envied the social distinctions of the Anician House will emulate their sanctity.

Bishop Alypius and Augustine together wrote a letter to Juliana,[2] Proba's widowed daughter-in-law, mother of the religious Demetrias. The Bishops were at Hippo when Juliana replied to Augustine's letter congratulating her on her daughter taking the veil.

Juliana evidently felt a little nettled because Augustine warned her not to pay attention to perverters of the faith. She thanked him for his admonition, but hastened to assure him that persons of that description were kept at a distance from the house, and that neither she nor any of her relatives had been known to lapse into heresy: no, nor even into minor errors in faith.

Augustine replies that he considers Juliana's house to be a Christian Church of no small importance; but that there are errors against which it is necessary to be on guard.

He has been reading a book which he understands is addressed to Juliana's daughter Demetrias, in which spiritual graces are ascribed exclusively to our personal efforts. This document was the work of Pelagius. No one, says this book,[3] can confer spiritual wealth upon you except you yourself.

That maxim Augustine affirms to be absolutely irreconcilable with Apostolic Christianity. The power

[1] Letter 150.
[2] Letter 188, A.D. 418.
[3] Letter 188, § 4

is from God and not from ourselves (2 Cor. iv. 7). All cannot receive this word but they to whom it is given (Matt. xix. 11). "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (Jas. i. 17.) "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. iv. 7). God does not only help us to know what we ought to do, but also inspires us with love, so that we may carry into effect what we know we ought to do. Instruction in the ideal must be supplemented by power to love the ideal. And that power to love is a gift of God.[1]

Augustine is well aware that Juliana's house has been unimpeachably orthodox on the doctrine of the undivided Trinity. But there are other errors most pernicious.[2] And this must be his excuse for dwelling, perhaps at undue length, on the error before him. To deny the source of a gift which comes from God is to do God a wrong, that is to wrong the Holy Trinity.

He, therefore, bids Juliana ascertain whether in the book[3] in question, the help of God is anywhere acknowledged; except in the sense of the gift of human nature, or free will, or forgiveness, or revelation of doctrine.[4] Yet the fact is, that we are not only aided by a revelation of truth, but also by an infusion of charity enabling us to perform what we know to be our duty.

Thus Augustine can only consider this book to be dangerously misleading.[5] It encourages the religious to glory in herself instead of glorying in the Lord. Augustine adds that its author is Pelagius, although the book does not say so. This he gathers from a letter by Pelagius which has come his way.

He, therefore, asks Juliana to look into the matter and to acquaint him with the result of her inquiries.

The Bishop's vigilance and anxiety were more than justified.[6]

[1] Letter 188, § 8.
[2] Letter 188, § 10.
[3] Letter 188, § 12.
[4] Letter 188, § 13.
[5] Letter 188, § 14.
[6] See Augustine, *De Gratia Christi*, § 40. For the contents of

Troubles had arisen in a Community of Women over which the Bishop's sister formerly presided.[1] Augustine wrote to Mother Felicitas and the Sisters a letter in which he dwelt on the necessity at times of reproof, and of the spirit in which reproof should be uttered and received. If a person takes offence at being reproved, and the reprover retaliates, it is plain that the reprover was not qualified to give reproof but rather himself requires to be reproved. That is the spirit in which those in authority must act. They must aim at concord rather than at getting the better of each other in dispute. As vinegar corrodes a vessel if it continues long, so anger corrodes the heart if it is cherished till the morrow.

Augustine also wrote a long letter to the Sisters.[2] He is peculiarly grieved that, just at the very time when Donatists are coming into Unity divisions should break forth in a Monastery within the Church. The Sisters want to displace their Superior. Augustine points out that the present Superior has been there for years; she was assistant to his own sister, the former Superior, now dead. All the present Sisters had been received by her, passed their novitiate and taken the vows under her rule. She had successfully governed the House and increased its numbers. Augustine thinks that if the proposal to remove her had come from himself, the Convent would have great reason to deplore it. He exhorts them to submit to her authority.

The Bishop proceeds to lay down rules and give advice to the Sisterhood. The House contained Sisters of widely different social position.

He recommends that allowance should be made in the Convent for the wealthier sort, and that they should not be required to forego everything to which they had been accustomed in the world. The life must not be

---

Pelagius's letter to Demetrias, see *Letters on the Doctrine of Grace*, p. 126.

[1] Letter 210, A.D. 423.

[2] Letter 211, A.D. 423.

made unnecessarily hard for them. On the other hand the poorer sort must not expect to find in the Convent indulgence and comforts which they never possessed in the world: nor must they give themselves airs because they now associate on terms of equality with persons whom they dared not approach while living in the world. At the same time those who formerly held distinguished positions in the world must avoid pride of social distinction. Pride can so easily vitiate the best of human deeds.

The chapel is to be kept exclusively for its sacred purposes. Nothing must be permitted there which may disturb or distract those who enter it to pray.

They ought to fast. But only so far as health allows. Those who are unable to fast should not take food except at mealtimes: unless, indeed, they are ill. Religious books are to be read to the Sisters at meals.

Everything conspicuous in dress or demeanour is to be carefully avoided.

They are to warn each other of their faults and to report to the Superior the defects of a Sister who refuses to listen to them. If the offender refuse correction, she must be expelled from the Sisterhood.

Augustine regulates the care of the sick members, the charge of the store-room and the library. Manuscripts are to be applied for daily at a fixed hour, and not to be given out at any other time.

They are to cultivate mutual forbearance and forgiveness. They are to give obedience to their Superior as a mother. Also they are to obey the presbyter who has charge of them.

To complete the number of Augustine's letters to women, we must add the short note to the famous Fabiola (Letter 267). There are also the letters written to S. Paulinus and his wife Therasia.

All these letters imply (what we know from other sources, such as the Letters of S. Jerome) not only a

high level of education, but also of theological knowledge among the women of the early fifth century. Whether Augustine is writing on Christian ethics to the self-willed lady Ecdicia, or on the Incarnation to Maxima, or on Novatianism to Seleuciana, or on Pelagianism to Juliana, he certainly does not break the bread of knowledge into any smaller fragments than when he is writing to men. It is questionable whether the Church-women were not better informed on doctrine than a number of the Churchmen of a corresponding social level.

When Augustine wrote to these Roman ladies, he nowhere gives such elementary instruction as he did to Count Boniface, who had to be informed what the difference was between a Donatist and an Arian (Letter 175).

And certainly his spiritual letters, such as that to Italica on the Vision of God, or to Proba on Prayer, are as profound as any writings of the kind composed by Augustine for men.

These letters also reveal the extent to which Community life appealed to women of the highest social and intellectual rank of that period.

Note also that the elaborate refutation of Pelagianism in the treatise on the Grace of Christ and on the doctrine of Original Sin, was written for the instruction of Albina, Pinian and Melania.

CHAPTER IX

LETTERS ON THE EUCHARIST[1]

AUGUSTINE'S sacramental teaching was largely given in discussions on the problems created by schism. The question what constituted validity of a Sacrament was forced upon the Church by the theories of the Donatists. Incidentally much had to be taught concerning the sacramental principle in general, and the nature of Baptism and Ordination in particular. The Sacraments, therefore, are discussed all through the letters on the African Church divisions. But there was also much sacramental teaching which clearly would have been given in any case if no divisions had existed. Above all, Augustine has much to say in his letters concerning the Eucharist. It seems desirable to collect together the principal features of his instructions on the Sacrament of the Altar.

Some insight into the devotional practices of Augustine's times is to be obtained from the letter to a priest named Casulan.[2] Casulan had been reading a work by a priest residing in Rome, whose purpose was to enforce on Christendom the custom prevalent in the local Roman Church of fasting on the Sabbath Day. The author was an ecclesiastic of a narrow type, and a person whose hard aggressive soul exceeded his knowledge. Casulan, who was evidently a little scandalised by the author's arguments, appeals to Augustine

[1] See Karl Adam, *Die Eucharistie-Lehre des h. Augustin.* 1908. Darwell Stone, *Doctrine of the Eucharist.*

[2] Letter 36.

for information whether it is lawful to fast on the Sabbath. To this inquiry Augustine sends a long reply. It should be noticed that in this letter the Sabbath and the Lord's Day are never confused. The Sabbath is the Jewish festival, the last day of the week; the Lord's Day is the Christian festival, with which the week begins. This distinction is clearly carefully observed by all who were concerned in this discussion. Indeed, the discussion is unintelligible if the Sabbath and the Sunday are identified.

To the question, Is it lawful to fast on the Sabbath? Augustine replies that if it were not, neither Moses nor Elijah nor our Lord during their protracted fasts would have done so. If any one, therefore, infers that fasting on the Lord's Day must also be permissible, Augustine replies that this cannot be done without causing scandal to the Church. And here he appeals to the principles of custom and tradition. In those matters concerning which Holy Scripture gives no certain ruling, the custom of the people of God, or the decisions of our forefathers, must be regarded as the law.[1]

Now the custom of the Church, excepting the Roman and a few Western communities, was not to fast on the Sabbath. The Church at Rome fasted on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. The Roman writer argued that it was necessary at least to fast three times in the week, otherwise the Christian would be no better than the Pharisees who only fasted twice.[2] As if, says Augustine, the Pharisee was condemned on the ground of the insufficient number of the fast days which he kept. Besides this, adds Augustine sarcastically, the Pharisee gave tithes of all that he possessed. Not many Christians did as much.

The Roman writer argued with so little sense of

[1] In his enim rebus de quibus nihil certi statuit Scriptura divina, mos populi Dei, vel instituta majorum pro lege tenenda sunt.

[2] Letter 36, § 7.

proportion that the logical inference would be that Christians ought[1] to fast on the Lord's Day as well as the Sabbath. Otherwise they paid more deference to the day on which the Lord lay in the grave than to that in which He arose from the dead. The Roman wrote in praise of fasting in extravagant terms. By food Adam lost Paradise, and Esau his birthright. If, as the Roman asserted, fasting on the Sabbath was the avoidance of all sin, the Lord's Day ought not to be deprived of those advantages. But to argue in such a manner is to scandalise the whole Church, which[2] does not fast on the Lord's Day. When the Apostle said that the Kingdom of God was not food and drink, he was not insisting that it was a Christian obligation to fast on the Sabbath.[3] Nor was it a true interpretation of Scripture to identify fasting with the Sacrifice of Praise.[4] Fasting is a practice confined to certain days and omitted on festivals; but the Sacrifice of Praise was offered by the Universal Church on every day.

The Roman pamphleteer reached the extreme of his extravagance when he denounced all who did not fast on the Sabbath, and fulminated against them the woe incurred by all who put bitter for sweet and darkness instead of light. To which Augustine answers that he is not sure what the writer means. But, whatever he means, Casulan must not suppose that the Christian city (urbs Christiana, *i.e.* Rome) advocates fasting on the Sabbath in such a manner as to condemn the practice of the Christian world (orbis Christianus).[5]

But here the Roman author fell back on the authority of S. Peter. Peter himself, who was "the head of the Apostles, doorkeeper of Heaven, and foundation of the Church,"[6] had taught this practice of fasting on the Sabbath to the Romans whose faith was proclaimed in the whole *orbis terrarum.* The story was, that the

[1] Letter 36, § 12.
[2] Letter 36, § 16.
[3] Letter 36, § 17.
[4] Letter 36, § 18.
[5] Letter 36, § 20.
[6] Letter 36, § 21.

Apostle S. Peter being about to contend with Simon Magus on the Lord's Day fasted on the Saturday with the Church of the city ; and that the Roman Church in memory of Peter's triumph continued to observe the Sabbath as a fast, in which practice certain other Western Churches followed them.

Augustine in reply inquires whether, assuming that the Roman custom can be traced to S. Peter, the other Apostles taught the rest of the Catholic world the opposite practice in contradiction to S. Peter. If the Roman advocate replies[1] that S. James taught the same at Jerusalem, and S. John at Ephesus, as S. Peter taught at Rome, but that all these Churches have departed from their teaching and only the Church at Rome has stood firm, this is only to raise problems which cannot be solved ; it is just as easy to say that the Western Churches, Rome included, have not kept what the Apostles delivered unto them, and that the Eastern Churches, where the Gospel was first proclaimed, have kept what all the other Apostles together with Peter himself taught them, namely, that they ought not to fast upon the Sabbath. Obviously there is no end to such mutual recriminations. Nothing can come of them but interminable controversy. After all, unity of Faith is consistent with diversity of observances. The King's daughter, *i.e.* the Church, is all glorious *within*. But the diversity of observances are but the fringes of the Church's vesture over which there is no necessity to arouse contention.

The Roman advocated these claims further by urging that it was the duty of a Christian to be as unlike the Jew as possible. The Jew by observing the Sabbath rejected the Lord's Day, how then could a Christian observe the Sabbath? To fast upon the Sabbath commended itself as the plainest revolt from anything Jewish. The old dispensation was gone. Old

[1] Letter 36, § 22.

things had passed away. You cannot serve two masters.

The Roman went on to emphasise the differences between Israel and the Church. He maintained that the Jewish *Ara* had given place to the Christian *Altare;* the Jewish Sacrifice of the Flesh to the Christian Sacrifice of the Bread; the Jewish Offering of Blood to the Christian Cup.

Augustine criticises these distinctions as inaccurate. The name *Altare* occurs constantly in the Law and the Prophets. The *Altare* of God stood in the Tabernacle. And the term *Ara* occurs in the apostolic writings. The Martyrs plead under the *Ara Dei* (Apoc. vi. 9–10). There was the shewbread on the Table of the Lord in the Jew's religion. And we are now partakers of the Body of the Immaculate Lamb. Accordingly it would be more in harmony with fact if we were to claim that the old had been made new in Christ; that one *Altare* had succeeded to another, one Bread to another, one Lamb to another and Blood to Bread. There had been a transition from the carnal to the spiritual. Thus, whether the Sabbath was kept as a fast or not, the carnal meaning of the day has ceased.

Looking to the New Testament principles as a whole, Augustine says it is clear that fasting is enjoined, but no detailed application of the practice to any specified days is found either in the teaching of Christ or in that of His Apostles. Fasting on the Lord's Day ought nowhere to be encouraged. It is a mark of the Manichæan heresy.

Augustine says that the reason why the Church fasted on the fourth day of the week is because that was the day on which the Jews took counsel to slay our Lord.[1] The Friday fast requires no explanation. The Sabbath was observed as a feast by those who

[1] Letter 36, § 30.

thought chiefly of our Lord's Death as rest;[1] as a fast by those who laid stress on the aspect of its humiliation.

The letter concludes by recounting the advice of S. Ambrose on observing the Sabbath. Augustine has told this story more than once. He gives it again in the celebrated letter to Januarius (Letter 54, § 3). It was the custom at Carthage, or Thagaste, to fast on the Sabbath. But the Church at Milan did not observe this practice. The independence of the Church at Milan from Roman influence is a well-known feature of early history. When Monnica came to reside for a time at Milan she was in some perplexity which practice she ought to follow. She sent Augustine to consult Ambrose about it. Ambrose replied that when he was at Milan he did not fast on the Sabbath, but when at Rome he did. With this ruling Monnica complied. Augustine here adds that he himself followed the same rule in Africa. If he came to a church where both practices existed he followed the use of those who were responsible for the Church's guidance. His advice, therefore, to Casulan[2] was to follow the guidance of his bishop, and by no means in this matter to resist him.

The first letter to Januarius, written in the year 400,[3] is certainly among the most celebrated in Augustine's correspondence. It deals with practical observances concerning the Eucharist. Januarius had written to inquire what was a Churchman's duty with regard to observances which differed in various portions of the Church.

Augustine considers that the ruling principle in a discussion on this subject should be found in the fact that Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light; that "He has bound together the new Community of His people by Sacraments in number very few, in

[1] Letter 36, § 31.
[2] Letter 36, § 32.
[3] Letter 54.

observance very easy, and in meaning very excellent; such as Baptism solemnised in the name of the Trinity, the Communication of His Body and Blood, and whatever else is enjoined in the Canonical Scriptures . . ." [1]

In addition to those observances which rest on the authority of Scripture there are others which rest on the authority of tradition ("non scripta sed tradita"). Augustine contemplates certain observances which prevail universally: such as the yearly commemoration of the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, and of the Descent of the Holy Spirit. These are regarded by Augustine either as instituted by the Apostles, or sanctioned by Plenary Councils which have great value in the Church. These are cases in which the observance is universal.

Passing to cases where observance differs in different localities, Augustine gives examples.[2] "Some fast on Saturday, others do not; some partake daily of the Body and Blood of Christ; others receive it on stated days; in some places no day passes without the Sacrifice being offered; in others it is only on Saturday and the Lord's Day, or it may be only on the Lord's Day."

Augustine considers that in all these cases observance is optional, and that "there is no better rule for a wise and serious Christian than to conform to the practice which he finds prevailing in the Church which he may happen to visit."

And here again he illustrates this rule by the advice of S. Ambrose to Monnica at Milan.[3]

Here he is concerned with the question of the frequency of reception of the Eucharist. Opinion was divided about this at the beginning of the fifth century. Augustine gives three views.

1. Some held that the Eucharist ought not to be

[1] Letter 54, § 1. [2] Letter 54, § 2.
[3] *Cf.* Letter 36, § 32.

taken every day; but only on days of special preparedness. For this view reference was made to the warning in 1 Cor. xi. 29.

2. Others held that if a person judged himself unfit to receive he ought to be forbidden by the Bishop to approach the Altar until he had done penance. The basis of this view was that the individual cannot withdraw from the Communion of the Church or restore himself as he pleases.

The first of these two views regarded reception as an individual act, the second as a social act.

3. The third opinion was, that each individual should, in the matter of reception, do what he conscientiously believed to be his duty. Augustine favoured this view. He did so for the following reason:[1] "Neither of them lightly esteems the Body and Blood of the Lord; on the contrary both are contending who shall most highly honour the Sacrament." Augustine compares the advocates of the two opinions to Zacchæus and the Centurion. "The former joyfully received the Lord into his house, the latter said 'I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof'; both honouring the Saviour, though in ways diverse, and, as it were, mutually opposed; both miserable through sin, and both obtaining the mercy they required."

Augustine next proceeds to discuss[2] the celebration of the Eucharist on the Thursday of the last week in Lent.

"Suppose some foreigner visits a place[3] in which during Lent it is customary to abstain from the use of the bath and to continue fasting on Thursday. 'I will not fast to-day,' he says. The reason being asked, he says, 'Such is not the custom in my own country.' Is not he, by such conduct, attempting to assert the superiority of his custom over theirs? For he cannot

[1] Letter 54, § 4. [2] Letter 54, § 5.
[3] Letter 54, § 5. Cunningham's translation.

quote a decisive passage on the subject from the Book of God; nor can he prove his opinion to be right by the unanimous voice of the Universal Church, wherever spread abroad; nor can he demonstrate that they act contrary to the faith, and he according to it, or that they are doing what is prejudicial to sound morality, and he is defending its interests. Those men injure their own tranquillity and peace by quarrelling on an unnecessary question. I would rather recommend that, in matters of this kind, each man should, when sojourning in a country in which he finds a custom different from his own, consent to do as others do. If on the other hand, a Christian, when travelling abroad in some region where the people of God are more numerous, and more easily assembled together, and more zealous in religion, has seen, for example, the Sacrifice twice offered, both morning and evening, on the Thursday of the last week in Lent, and therefore, on his coming back to his own country, where it is offered only at the close of the day, protests against this as wrong and unlawful, because he has himself seen another custom in another land, this would show a childish weakness of judgment against which we should guard ourselves, and which we must bear with in others, but correct in all who are under our influence.

"Observe now to which of these three classes the first question in your letter is to be referred. You ask: 'What ought to be done on the Thursday of the last week in Lent? Ought we to offer the Sacrifice in the morning, and again after supper, on account of the words of the Gospel "Likewise also after supper"? or ought we to fast, and offer the Sacrifice only after supper? Or ought we to fast until the offering has been made, and then take supper as we are accustomed to do?' I answer, therefore, that if the authority of Scripture has decided which of these methods is right, there is no room for doubting that we should do according to that which is written; and our discussion

must be occupied with a question, not of duty, but of interpretation as to the meaning of the Divine institution. In like manner, if the Universal Church follows any one of these methods, there is no room for doubt as to our duty; for it would be the height of arrogant madness to discuss whether or not we should comply with it. But the question which you propose is not decided either by Scripture or by universal practice. It must, therefore, be referred to a third class: as pertaining, namely, to things which are different in different places and countries. Let every man, therefore, conform himself to the usage prevailing in the Church to which he may come. For none of these methods is contrary to the Christian Faith or the interests of morality, as favoured by the adoption of one custom more than the other. If this were the case, that either the faith or sound morality were at stake, it would be necessary either to change what was done amiss, or to appoint the doing of what had been neglected. But mere change of custom, even though it may be of advantage in some respects, unsettles men by reason of the novelty: therefore, if it brings no advantage, it does much harm by unprofitably disturbing the Church.

"Let me add that it would be a mistake to suppose that the custom, prevalent in many places, of offering the Sacrifice on that day after partaking of food, is to be traced to the words, 'Likewise after supper,' etc. For the Lord might give the name of supper to what they had received, in already partaking of His Body, so that it was after this that they partook of the Cup: as the Apostle says in another place, 'When ye come together into one place, this is not to *eat* the Lord's Supper,' giving to the receiving of the Eucharist to that extent (*i.e.* the eating of the bread) the name of the Lord's Supper.

"As to the question whether upon that day it is right to partake of food before either offering or partaking of the Eucharist these words in the Gospel

might go far to decide our minds, 'As they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it,' taken in connection with the words in the preceding context, 'When the even was come, he sat down with the twelve: and as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray me.' For it was after that that He instituted the Sacrament; and it is clear that when the disciples first received the Body and Blood of the Lord, they had not been fasting.

"Must we, therefore, censure the Universal Church because the Sacrament is everywhere partaken of by persons fasting? Nay, verily, for from that time it pleased the Holy Spirit to appoint, for the honour of so great a Sacrament, that the Body of the Lord should take the precedence of all other food entering the mouth of a Christian; and it is for this reason that the custom referred to is universally observed. For the fact that the Lord instituted the Sacrament after other food had been partaken of, does not prove that brethren should come together to partake of the Sacrament after having dined or supped, or imitate those whom the Apostle reproved and corrected for not distinguishing between the Lord's Supper and an ordinary meal. The Saviour, indeed, in order to commend the depth of that mystery more affectingly to His disciples, was pleased to impress it on their hearts and memories by making its institution His last act before going from them to His Passion. And, therefore, He did not prescribe the order in which it was to be observed, reserving this to be done by the Apostles, through whom He intended to arrange all things pertaining to the Churches. Had He appointed that the Sacrament should be always partaken of after other food, I believe that no one would have departed from that practice. But when the Apostle, speaking of this Sacrament says, 'Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not

together unto condemnation,' he immediately adds, 'and the rest will I set in order when I come.' Whence we are given to understand that, since it was too much for him to prescribe completely in an epistle the method observed by the Universal Church throughout the world, it was one of the things set in order by him in person, for we find its observance uniform amid all the variety of other customs.

"There are, indeed, some to whom it has seemed right (and their view is not unreasonable) that it is lawful for the Body and Blood of the Lord to be offered and received after other food has been partaken of, on one fixed day of the year, the day on which the Lord instituted the Supper, in order to give special solemnity to the service on that anniversary. I think that, in this case, it would be more seemly to have it celebrated at such an hour as would leave it in the power of any who have fasted to attend the service before the repast which is customary at the ninth hour." [There is a difficulty in the reading of the text here. The Benedictine's reading is *after the repast.* But there is MS. authority for reading *before the repast.*]

"Wherefore we neither compel nor do we dare to forbid any one to break his fast before the Lord's Supper on that day. I believe, however, that the real ground upon which this custom rests is, that many, nay almost all, are accustomed in most places to bathe on that day. And because some continue to fast, it is offered in the morning, for those who take food, because they cannot bear fasting and the use of the bath at the same time; and in the evening for those who have fasted all day."

The second of the two letters to Januarius[1] is greatly inferior in value to the first. It deals with such questions as: Why we do not observe the anniversary of the Passion on the same day every year, as we do the anniversary of the Birth (§ 2). Much is said on numerical

[1] Letter 55, § 9.

symbolism (§ 10, etc., to end of § 31). Our Lord washing the disciples' feet is spoken of as literally instituted in some places, while it was a custom which "many have not accepted" (§ 33).

Returning to the subject discussed in the first letter,[1] the variety of ceremonial observed in various parts of the Church, Augustine here remarks that ceremonial to which we are not accustomed should not be adversely criticised, but may be commended and copied provided that such imitation produces no offence. "We are not, however, to be restrained" from such imitation by the fear of offending some, "if more good is to be expected from our consenting with those who are zealous for the ceremony than loss to be feared from our displeasing those who protest against it."

As an example of this Augustine refers to the practice of singing hymns and psalms, "for which we have on record both the example and the precepts of our Lord and of His Apostles. In this religious exercise, so useful for inducing a devotional frame of mind and inflaming the strength of love to God, there is diversity of usage, and in Africa the members of the Church are rather too indifferent in regard to it; on which account the Donatists reproach us with our grave chanting of the divine songs of the prophets in our churches, while they inflame their passions in their revels by the singing of psalms of human composition, which rouse them like the stirring notes of the trumpet on the battlefield. But when brethren are assembled in the Church, why should not the time be devoted to singing of sacred songs, excepting of course while reading or preaching is going on, or while the presiding minister prays aloud, or the united prayer of the congregation is led by the deacon's voice? At the intervals not thus occupied, I do not see what could be a more excellent, useful and holy exercise for a Christian congregation."[2]

[1] Letter 55, § 34.

[2] *Ibid.*

It is very instructive to find this distinction in the fifth century between the two types of African Christianity; the severe restraint on the Catholic side and the emotionalism and excitement on the side of the Donatist Community. It is also noteworthy that the Church in Africa was slower than the Church in Italy to make full use of singing in devotion. Augustine is probably tacitly contrasting here what he remembers of the singing of S. Ambrose's hymns in the Church at Milan with the narrower practice of the Church in Africa.

With regard to the introduction of new ceremonial Augustine adds:[1] "I cannot, however, sanction with my approval those ceremonies which are departures from the custom of the Church, and are instituted on the pretext of being symbolical of some holy mysteries; although for the sake of avoiding offence to the piety of some and the pugnacity of others, I do not venture to condemn severely many things of this kind."

He lays down, however, the following principle: "My opinion therefore is, that, wherever it is possible, all those things should be abolished without hesitation which neither have warrant in Holy Scripture, nor are found to have been appointed by councils of bishops, nor are confirmed by the practice of the Universal Church, but are so infinitely various, according to the different customs of different places, that it is with difficulty, if at all, that the reasons which guided men in appointing them can be discovered. For even although nothing be found, perhaps, in which they are against the true faith; yet the Christian religion, which God in His mercy made free, appointing to her Sacraments very few in number, and very easily observed, is by these burdensome ceremonies so oppressed, that the condition of the Jewish Church itself is preferable; for although they have not known the time of their freedom, they are subjected to burdens imposed by the law of God, not by the vain conceits of men."

[1] Letter 55, § 35.

A problem on Infant Baptism was set before Augustine[1] for solution by Bishop Boniface. The problem was whether parents can injure their baptised infants if they offer Pagan sacrifice in the children's behalf. The answer to this is, No. The child has no share in the guilt, being unconscious of the incident. When the child once possesses an independent existence, it cannot be held responsible for sins committed without its own consent.

Then asks the Questioner: "How, then, can the parents' faith benefit the infant in Baptism, when the parents' unbelief cannot injure it after it is baptised?"

The answer is, that Regeneration is conferred by the Sacrament and not by the parents' faith.[2] It is not written, says Augustine, except a man be born again of his parents' will, or of the faith of those who present him to Baptism or who minister the Sacrament; but, except a man be born again of Water and of the Holy Spirit. Thus Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit. As Augustine puts it: the water externally manifesting the Sacrament of Grace, and the Spirit inwardly effecting the benefit of Grace. ("Aqua igitur exhibens forinsecus sacramentum gratiæ, et Spiritus operans intrinsecus beneficium gratiæ.") The Regenerating Spirit is present alike in the elders who offer the child, and in the child who is offered and born again. And it is this association in the one Spirit which gives value to the parents' faith. The stress, according to Augustine, must be laid on the Divine side and not on the mere human belief.

But when parents offer sacrifice to Pagan divinities for a baptised infant there is no common bond of union between them in the Presence of the Holy Spirit. It is they who sin and not the infant. He cannot share the responsibility. For sin is not communicated through the medium of another person's will in the way in which grace is communicated through union with the Holy

[1] Letter 98.

[2] Letter 98, § 2.

Spirit. The unconsciousness of the infant makes no difference to the presence of the Spirit. Thus Augustine's doctrine is, that the infant by its birth into the natural order shares the common defect of the nature which it inherits. But on being born into the spiritual order, by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, it is liberated from, and can no more be bound by, the defects of the natural order. When the grace of Christ is once received, the child cannot lose it except by his own impiety. When it begins to have sins of its own, these are not removed by Regeneration but are healed another way.

At the same time Augustine holds that the responsibility of the parents who offer Pagan rites [1] for a Christian child is very great. It is nothing less than a case of spiritual homicide. They are in intention killing the child spiritually, were such an act within their power. But the guilt of the action recoils only on the perpetrators. It is the soul that sinneth which will die. The just judgment of God, says Augustine, will not allow those to perish whose parents so far as it was in their power deceived them. A principle which it had been well if Augustine had applied in certain other parts of his theological construction.

The thought that the faith of the parents receives its value from the presence of the Holy Spirit within them as well as within the regenerated child, leads naturally to the question: What if the faith of the parents or sponsors in Baptism is not genuine? What if the parents bring a child to Baptism solely from an idea that the Sacrament will improve its physical health?

Augustine's reply is important. The regeneration of a child does not depend on the intention of the parents. There are certain conditions indispensable to the validity of a Sacrament. But the intention or the faith is not simply the intention or the faith of a few individuals,

[1] Letter 98, § 3.

relatives or friends, who bring the child to be baptised. It is the intention or faith of the whole Church which is the real presenter of the child to the Sacrament.

Bishop Boniface further inquired: Whether it was right for sponsors to make professions of faith on behalf of an infant at its Baptism? If you were asked: Will this child grow up good or bad? you would have to reply that you could not tell. And yet when the sponsors are asked: Does this child believe in God? They answer, Yes; and this when the child is at an age incapable of any ideas whatever.[1]

Augustine admits the problem to be difficult; deserving, indeed, a lengthy treatment which he has not the time to give. But he suggests that there is such a thing in religion as symbolical language; language in which we transfer to the Sign, or emblem, what is strictly speaking true of the Thing Signified. Augustine does not here employ these familiar terms the Sign and the Thing Signified. But this in effect is what he means. He gives certain illustrations. Thus, for example, we say, this is the day when the Lord rose from the dead; when, as a matter of fact, of course, the actual Resurrection of our Lord took place long ago. But nobody would misunderstand this transference of the fact from the Thing Signified to the Sign.

Here is another illustration: a very well-known passage.

"Was not Christ once sacrificed in His own self?[2] And yet we say that Christ is daily sacrificed. . . . For if the Sacraments had not a certain resemblance to the things of which they are Sacraments, they would not be Sacraments at all. And from the fact of this resemblance the Sacraments frequently receive the names of the realities which they represent. As, therefore, after a certain manner the Sacrament of the Body of Christ is the Body of Christ, and the Sacrament of the Blood

[1] Letter 98, § 7. [2] Letter 98, § 9.

of Christ is the Blood of Christ, so the Sacrament of faith is faith."

Augustine's reply is subtle and requires reflection. The point is: How can we reasonably ascribe faith to an unconscious infant at Baptism? Augustine's answer is that the popular use of language makes this defensible. For we are accustomed to ascribe to a sign the properties of the thing which the sign represents. Augustine's first illustration is: We say, this is the Day when Christ rose from the Dead, when what we strictly mean is, this is the anniversary of the actual event. His second illustration is that the Sacrifice of Christ was offered once for all in His actual Passion, and yet it is offered by Christians every day. This second illustration suggests a different idea. For the offering of Christ by Christians every day is in itself a reality and not a simple reminder of a past event. Augustine certainly regarded the Eucharist as an actual offering made to God: a real spiritual transaction, and not a mere external sign. The Sacrament does not merely represent, but actually is, the Body and Blood of Christ. Augustine says: "*is* after a certain manner (secundum quemdam modum)"; because the Body and Blood are not there in the physical conditions of the Passion. He does not mean by the phrase "after a certain manner" that the Sacrament is merely in a figurative or representative or symbolical sense the Body and the Blood. The Sacrament of the Eucharist was immeasurably more to Augustine than a representative Sign. And yet the Sacrament is a representation of what occurred in the Passion: the Body wounded, the Blood outpoured. Thus it is true that we apply to the Sacrament what is strictly applicable only to the Passion. But we must be careful not to suppose that Augustine separated Christ's Presence from the Eucharist, or regarded the Sacramental Sign as a mere reference to the Passion as if the Body and Blood were only on the Cross and not in the Eucharist.

A third illustration given by Augustine is the Pauline

teaching that we are buried with Christ in Baptism (Rom. vi. 4). S. Paul does not say that Baptism signifies or represents our burial: it is our burial. He calls the Sacrament of this great spiritual reality by the name of this reality.

Now here again Augustine certainly does not mean that Baptism is merely the sign of the inner spiritual change in the person baptised. His doctrine is not that the Sign and the Thing Signified are separated. They go together. No doubt Augustine held a theory of suspended effects; that the grace received did not operate except under conditions. But he certainly held that the Sacramental grace was received. This was why Baptism could never be repeated. Sign and Thing Signified go together. He has already said as much: "The water externally manifesting the Sacrament of grace, and the Spirit inwardly effecting the benefit of grace." If, then, what is true of the Thing Signified is ascribed to the Sign—or, to put it in other words, what is true of the Holy Spirit is ascribed to the Sacrament—this does not mean that you can separate the outer from the inner, or regard the outer as a symbol of something not necessarily given.

Augustine would be less liable to misinterpretation if we remember that in the ancient mind Signs were not regarded as suggestions of absent realities but indications of their presence.

Accordingly when Augustine applies this principle of ascribing to the Sign what is true of the Thing Signified to the case of the unconscious infant who at its Baptism is declared to be the possessor of faith, he does not mean in the least that nothing is conferred upon the infant in the way of inner grace, or that the Sign is separated from the Thing Signified, or that faith is ascribed to the infant only by way of hopeful anticipation. We must remember that Augustine has already spoken of the Regenerating Spirit as common alike to the parents and to the infant baptised (§ 2). Also that he expressly

says that, although the infant does not yet possess that faith which consists in the will to believe, nevertheless the Sacrament of faith constitutes him a believer (§ 10). Why? Obviously because it implants within him the grace which is the principle whence subjective faith is to spring. Augustine held that when self-conscious intelligence dawns the child is to be instructed in the nature of the gift it has received: not to repeat its Baptism but to utilise what it already possesses. And if it dies before the age when intelligence begins, it is saved by the Sacrament which it has received. This shows in the clearest way that in Augustine's mind the Outward Sacrament and the Inward Reality were not separated but simultaneously conferred. And this conclusion harmonises the great teacher's principles in perfect consistency.

On the subject of religious sacrifice[1] Pagan writers complained that while Christians found fault with the sacrificial worship of the Pagan Temples, the same kind of worship existed formerly among themselves.

In reply to this complaint,[2] Augustine answered that sacrificial worship was certainly immemorial; that Christians do not criticise Pagan rites merely because they appointed priests and offered sacrifices. Christian criticism is not opposed to the form of devotion, but to the object to which it is offered. Sacrifice is not a mistaken principle. It is the offering sacrifice to false divinities which is the wrong. What is condemned in heathen superstitions by the true religion is not the mere offering of sacrifices (for the ancient saints offered these to the true God), but the offering of sacrifices to false divinities. Sacrifice is an offering due to God alone, and may not be offered to any but to Him.[3]

This leads Augustine to explain that sacrifice holds its place in the worship of the Christian Church. There is a sacrifice, says Augustine, which is offered by

[1] Letter 102, § 16.
[2] Letter 102, § 17.
[3] Letter 102, § 19.

Christians at this present time. That sacrifice is set before us in the Gospel. It is a sacred mystery and is celebrated by Divine Authority.[1]

And here Augustine anticipates a probable criticism. The Pagan will ask: Why, if you believe in the principle of sacrifice, have you Christians altered its form? Augustine explains that the reason why the Christian sacrifice differs in form from the Jewish is that the Jewish was prospective and prophetic, while the Christian is retrospective. Between them lies the one true Offering of the one Priest. The change then is not in the religion, nor in the object of devotion. But what came before Christ and what followed after Him must naturally differ in form. Each is appropriate to its own period. Just as a man might bring one kind of offering in the morning and another kind in the evening, but offers both to the selfsame deity. His religion is the same, and his deity is the same. But different forms are adapted to different seasons.[2]

Augustine then accepts the principle of ceremonial sacrifices as entirely Christian.

Further he adds that all external sacrifices are symbolical.[3] They are signs of inward realities. And we ought to view the Sign in the light of the Thing Signified.

Augustine in this letter refers his reader to what he has written elsewhere on the same subject. Probably, what he had in mind is the passage in reply to Faustus the Manichæan (Book XXII. § 17). In that passage, however, Augustine adds little if anything to what he has given here, and omits all reference to the Eucharist.

The distinguished official of State, Marcellinus, set before Augustine the same problem: Why is it that God, Who rejected the sacrifices of the Old Dispensation[4] should have authorised those of the New? This alteration of religious ceremonial appeared to him incon-

[1] Letter 102, § 21.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Letter 102, § 17.
[4] Letter 138.

sistent with Divine Unchangeableness. To inaugurate new seemed to disparage His own earlier directions.

Augustine's solution is that all life is constructed on the principle of change. This is the case with the seasons of the year and with the life of the individual. Childhood, Youth, Maturity, Age : But these external changes do not imply any change in the Divine plan. Augustine quotes the case of a patient who grew worse through adhering beyond the proper time to his doctor's prescriptions.

Apply these analogies to the case of sacrifice. The Jewish sacrifices were divinely ordained, and appropriate to the period for which they were designed.[1] Now Sacraments may be defined as symbolical actions pertaining to Divine things. The institution of new symbolical actions did not mean that the old had suddenly lost the Divine Approval ; nor does it show inconsistency on the part of God. The two series were each respectively appropriate to their conditions. One series of symbolical actions was appropriate to foretell Christ's coming, and another to proclaim the fact that He had come.

Augustine's reply to men of other religions on the doctrine of sacrifice should be completed by his teaching on the subject in the *City of God* which, like the letter before us, was written for the instruction of Pagans.

In his work on the *City of God*, Augustine says, that "a sacrifice is the visible sacrament or sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice" (Book X. § 5). The outward offering is the symbol of the inward. The outward is not required for its own sake but for the sake of that which it symbolises.

And here he gives his famous definition : "A true sacrifice is every work which is done that we may be united to God in holy fellowship, and which has a

[1] Letter 138, § 7.

reference to that supreme good and end in which alone we can be truly blessed" (§ 6).

Sacrifice can be offered to God alone. Thus, mercy shown to men is not a sacrifice unless it is shown for God's sake. A life dedicated to God is a sacrifice. But it is essential to the definition that sacrifice is a work done in reference to God. The Christian congregation is offered to God as our sacrifice through the Great High Priest, who offered Himself to God in His Passion for us. Our Lord offered Himself to God in the form of a servant. That is to say, it is the Incarnation which makes this offering possible. Hence He is our Mediator, our Priest, our Sacrifice.

Thus Christians are to present themselves as a living sacrifice. "This is the sacrifice of Christians: We, being many, are one body in Christ. And this also is the sacrifice which the Church continually celebrates in the Sacrament of the Altar, known to the faithful, in which she teaches that she herself is offered in the offering she makes to God."[1]

Thus, then, according to Augustine, the Sacrament of the Altar is an offering which the Church makes to God. In that offering the Church itself is offered to God. And Christians are to offer themselves. Augustine distinguishes three things. He distinguishes between the offering which the Church makes in the Eucharist, and the offering which is made of the Church itself. He distinguishes also between the Church being offered passively, and the faithful offering themselves actively to God. There is: the offering of the Eucharist, the offering of the Church, and the Church offering itself to God.

1. If we ask: What is the sacrifice which the Church continually celebrates in the Sacrament of the Altar? the answer clearly must be, it is the Offering of Christ.

2. If we ask: What is meant by the Church being

[1] Letter 138, § 6. ?
de Civ. 10-6

passively an offering presented to God? the answer is, that the congregation is regarded as being offered to the Father by Jesus Christ, Who is our Great High Priest, and Who offered Himself to God for us in His Passion. Christ self-identified with the Church offers the congregation to the Father.

3. If we ask: What is meant by Christians presenting themselves in Sacrifice to God? the answer is, that this offering is not conceived as being something separated from the offering of Christ, but identified with it. The offering of ourselves cannot be separated from the offering of Christ, because our offering can only be made or accepted on the basis of His.

If the Christian congregation is offered in the Eucharist to God through the Great High Priest, it is clear that in Augustine's view Christ's work of making an offering to the Father is not simply past but continuous. He is still engaged in priestly and sacrificial functions now. It is also clear that in Augustine's view the offering of one person to God by another person is an essential part of the Christian idea. Christ is represented as offering His Church to the Father. But if so there is nothing inconceivable in the converse idea of the Church offering Christ to His Father. Both these ideas are based on the principle of self-identification with others as opposed to the principle of an exclusive individual isolation.

Briefly, then, by way of summary it may be said that Augustine

1. Employs the term Sacrament in two ways. (1) In a general and comprehensive sense as a Sacred Sign. Thus he can say to the Donatists: "You are with us in Baptism, in the Creed, and the other Sacraments of the Lord" (Letter 93). But (2) he also uses the term in a more restricted and definite meaning. Thus he calls the Eucharist "the Sacrament" (Letter 98).

2. He understands by the term Sacrament more than

a mere resemblance between the Sign and the Thing Signified. There is an intimate union between outward and inward. Thus, in Baptism the Water externally manifests the Sacrament of Grace, while the Spirit inwardly effects the benefit of Grace.

3. He teaches as a traditional belief that the Eucharist is an offering or a Sacrifice.

Augustine applies to the Eucharist the term Sacrifice of Praise, and describes it as being daily offered by the Universal Church (Letter 26). He applies the same term to the Christian Altar as he does to the Jewish (*ibid.*).[1] They differ as manifestations of the same sacrificial principle adapted to successive periods of human history. He speaks of the Sacrament of the Body of Christ (*ibid.*). His grievance against the Donatist schism is that it is "setting up Altar against Altar" (Letter 43, §, 4). With reference to the Eucharist he says that Christ is daily sacrificed (Letter 98, § 9, p. 400). See also Letter 187 on the Presence of God, where Augustine writes "Nosti autem in quo sacrificio dicatur, Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro" (§ 21). Elsewhere he told the congregation assembled to elect a coadjutor that "it was well that we are able to transact around His Sacrifice the things which belong to God" (Letter 213). Thus excommunication is described as being "removed from the Altar" (Letter 54, § 4, p. 187). His constant expression is to offer the Sacrifice.

[1] In Augustine's curious Psalm against the Donatists we read, sic fecerunt scissuram, et altare contra altare. The last three words are constantly repeated.

CHAPTER X

LETTERS ON DIOCESAN AFFAIRS

A BISHOP of the fifth century had much secular business thrust upon him. Already while Augustine was no more than a layman in his monastic seclusion at Thagaste his fellow-citizens intruded their secular affairs upon his Scriptural studies (Letter 5). After his consecration he had constantly to act as an unconventional magistrate. Citizens of Hippo brought all sorts of secular matters before him for decision: matters of business and matters of property, financial questions, farm and flocks, occupied precious hours and even days, and distracted him from spiritual considerations (Letter 33, § 5).

Augustine's letters show an enthusiastic belief in the value of religious communities. He knew of their existence during his years of wandering at Rome and at Milan. The monastic ideal contributed by contrast with his early self-indulgent life to promote his own conversion. This is recorded in his own *Confessions*. Community life was a subject of serious discussion, during his retirement before Baptism, at the Villa near Milan. He writes about it to his friend Nebridius (Letter 10). No sooner was he settled at Thagaste than he converted his house into a monastery. He did the same thing at Hippo after his ordination as priest. As Bishop he still lived in community. But of course the quiet and seclusion for continuous study was no longer possible. In a letter to Jerome he says that he can never emulate the learning of the recluse. His time is

absorbed in giving popular instruction. But he did his utmost to encourage the monastic institutions. It was he who introduced Monasticism into Africa. His own monastery at Hippo became remarkable for the number of bishops which it trained for the Church. It has been calculated that at least twelve African bishops received their training in Augustine's House. Of these the best known was his friend Evodius, who, like Augustine, promoted monastic life after he became bishop (Letter 158, § 10), and his biographer Possidius. The vocation of the monk was widely different from that of the priest; and Augustine, in his letters, speaks hesitatingly on converting the former into the latter (Letter 60). Still it is evident that priesthood was the destiny of many in his own monastery; and their training in this direction was apparently deliberate. Probably the urgent requirements of the African Church led Augustine to feel that the monastery must be a seminary for clergy. His own mind on the subject is clearly shown in a Letter (48) written as early as 398 to Abbot Eudoxius in the island of Capraria.

There he writes very wistfully of the blessedness of peaceful seclusion and uninterrupted devotion; and contrasts their life with his own, wounded and weakened in the mists and tumult of other people's secular affairs, in which they compel him to go a mile and he is bound to go with them twain. He is so busy that he can scarcely breathe.

Nevertheless he exhorts the monks that if their Mother the Church calls them to active service they must neither accept it too eagerly nor decline it through indolence. They have no right to prefer their own ease to the claims of the Church. If other men had acted on that principle, the monks' own spiritual life would have been impossible. On the other hand Augustine felt at times that the monastic life did not always provide a suitable training for the priesthood. Its entire ideal was so different. A man might be an excellent monk

and yet wholly unsuited for the labours of a priest (Letter 60).

Monasteries existed in Thagaste, Carthage and Hippo. There were also Communities of Women. Over one of these Augustine's sister had presided, and the Bishop drew up regulations for the religious.

A landowner named Publicola sent Augustine[1] a whole series of cases of conscience for the Bishop to solve. Some eighteen problems are propounded. Publicola was no stranger to Augustine. But the tone in which he writes is quaint. He insists that the Bishop must give him a definite, precise decision. He must on no account leave anything undecided. For if the Bishop replies doubtfully Publicola will be thrown into worse perplexities than those which afflicted him before he wrote.

The sort of problems which troubled Publicola are those which were created by commercial relations between the Latin colonists and the original natives of Africa. The natives were the carriers of the period. They protected the crops. They brought down goods and merchandise and corn from the interior to the towns upon the coast. Or they acted as guards to solitary travellers. All this was the ordinary and more or less irregular system. It was the custom of the colonists to make the natives swear fidelity on such occasions. And of course the natives took an oath by their Pagan deities.

Now it was this Pagan oath which disquieted the conscience of Publicola. He was evidently a thoughtful, conscientious and scrupulous person. He understands that the managers of his estates have followed the usual practice of exacting an oath of fidelity from the natives employed in protecting his crops. Publicola desires to know whether this Pagan oath does not contaminate both the crops and their owner. He has in mind

[1] Letter 46.

1 Cor. x. 28. He inquires whether it is right for a Christian to accept the service of Pagans on such terms.

Augustine's answer[1] is, that a Christian who accepts the service of a Pagan who pledges himself by his false gods, does not participate in the falseness of the man's religion but in the goodness of his faith.

Another of Publicola's cases of conscience was the instance of participation in food offered to idols.

Augustine in reply does little more than repeat S. Paul's direction to the Corinthians. He points out that anything like wholesale prohibition would lead to the inference that it was wrong for S. Paul to take food in Athens seeing that the whole city was dedicated to Minerva, and wrong for us to use the light of the sun because it was the object of Pagan worship.

Publicola further raised the question whether it was lawful for a Christian to kill any one in self-defence. Ought he to act literally on the maxim, "Resist not evil"? May he put a wall for defence round his own property? Suppose he does so, and another person utilises this wall as a means to kill an enemy, is the builder responsible for homicide?

Augustine in reply does not approve of a private individual killing any one in self-defence; but appears to except the soldier or the public official. This distinction seems to commend itself to Augustine (1) partly on the ground that the public official is defending others rather than himself, and (2) also because he is acting under lawful authority.

This was written in 398. Augustine had previously discussed this subject at considerable length in his dialogues *On Free Will*, published in 395.[2]

As to the injunction, "Resist not evil," Augustine held that it was intended to prohibit revenge; but not to prevent us from restraining other people from sin. On

[1] Letter 47.

[2] See *De Libero Arbitrio* I., II., ff. Works, Tom. I. p. 935.

these principles Publicola's cases of conscience are to be determined. A Christian has every right to protect his property by a wall. He is not responsible if a person is killed while attacking it. Augustine held that a Christian is not guilty of homicide though his ox may gore a man, or his horse kick a man, so that he dies. To argue otherwise would require that a Christian proprietor's oxen should have no horns, and his horses no hoofs, and his dogs no teeth. He must neither have a rope nor a tree lest some one should hang themselves by them, nor a window to his house lest any one should throw themselves down by it.

One more example of Publicola's cases of conscience deserves repeating: What if a traveller, exhausted by privation, came upon a deserted Pagan Temple where food was placed, and no other food could be found, and no other human being was near: ought he to take that food or die of hunger?

Augustine's answer has the virtue of conciseness:[1] "Either it is certain that this food was offered to the idol, or it is certain that it was not, or neither of these things is known. If it is certain, it is better to reject it with Christian fortitude. In either of the other alternatives, it may be used for his necessity without any conscientious scruple."

Augustine gives this problem: What to do with idol offerings, an extremely practical application by dwelling on a Christian duty when permission has been given for the destruction of temples and images. Our taking part in the demolition proves our abhorrence of these idolatries Nevertheless a Christian must decline to appropriate the spoils to his own private use. His motives must be above suspicion. It must be unquestionably that he is prompted by religion and not by avarice.

This warning was peculiarly appropriate at the time

[1] Letter 47, § 6

when it was given, since recent laws of the Empire allowed or ordered the destruction of Pagan Temples.

About the year 404 a dreadful scandal occurred in Augustine's Monastery. A priest accused a deacon of inciting him to immorality. Whereupon the deacon made a similar charge against his accuser. There was no evidence beyond the assertions of the two. Augustine suspected the deacon of retaliating by a false charge against his accuser. Accordingly Augustine refused to ordain him priest. The deacon then grew furious, and claimed that if ordination to priesthood was refused him as a suspected person, neither ought the priest to be allowed to continue to exercise his office. The priest was willing to consent to this. Meanwhile the affair became public property. Then Augustine wrote a letter [1] about it to the brethren, the clergy, the elders and the whole people of the Church of Hippo. He tells them of his perplexity. He is unable to discover the truth. But he has sent them both to the tomb of S. Felix of Nola. Not indeed that God is not in every place, but certain places have more awe-inspiring associations than others. And he has seen at Milan a thief, who intended to perjure himself, so overcome at the tomb of certain Saints that he made confession of his theft. Doubtless there are tombs of the martyrs in Africa, but Augustine is not aware of similar occurrences in his own country.[2]

So then the priest and the deacon have gone upon their pilgrimage. Augustine awaits results. Meanwhile he has not struck off the priest's name from the list of clergy. He has left the matter to the judgment of God. He may not anticipate the Divine decision. Moreover a Council of Carthage (in 387) ruled that no clergyman might be suspended from Communion before his guilt had been proved, except he refused to present

[1] Letter 78, A.D. 404.

[2] Instances are given in Benedict XIV. *De Synode Diacesana*, L. IV. cap. vi.

himself for trial. Augustine adds that the priest in question has humbly and freely consented to go without letters of commendation, so that his priestly office will not be known. If the Church at Hippo thinks that his name ought not to be read in the lists, they must act accordingly. But Augustine will not take the initiative. At the same time, whether a man's name is omitted from a list in Church is indifferent so long as a guilty conscience does not erase his name from the Book of Life.

Augustine then draws the moral from the thought of slander and calumny.[1] He dwells also on the unreasonable inferences which the world is always ready to draw from a Christian's fall. "They that sit in the gate speak against me, and the drunkards make songs upon me." As soon as any bishop or clergyman or monk or nun has fallen, the world generalises and maintains that all the whole class are just as bad, the only difference being that they are not found out. Yet with a glaring inconsistency the world declines to generalise in this way about a scandal in ordinary social life. If a married woman is proved unfaithful the inference is not drawn that all married women, wives and mothers, are no better. Human nature finds malicious pleasure over the fall of any person who makes a profession of religion.

It seems that some time previously two deacons who had been reconciled from the Donatist Communion had fallen into sin. And this was criticised as a proof of the weakness of religious discipline among the Donatists. Augustine hears that in the present instance some of his people are particularly upset because they are now deprived of the boast that the Catholic discipline under Augustine is superior to that of the Donatists. Augustine gently reproves his people for this. "However watchful the discipline of my house may be," writes Augustine, "I am but a man and live among men." He

[1] Letter 78, § 5.

does not pretend that his house is better than the Ark of Noah, in which among eight persons one was found a castaway; or better than the apostolic Twelve, among whom one was a traitor.

He gives it as his deliberate estimate of the Community life that, as he had hardly found any men better than those who have done well in monasteries, so he had not found men worse than monks who have fallen. To them applies the apostolic sentence: "He that is righteous, let him be still more righteous; and he that is filthy let him be still more filthy." But if failures could be found, there was a much larger proportion on the other side.

The letter to Victorin[1] deals with questions of ecclesiastical precedent in the assembling of provincial councils. Victorin was a bishop. He is addressed by Augustine as Father Victorin and as fellow-priest: priest being the usual designation of a bishop. Victorin had summoned Augustine to attend a Council. It was the year 401. Augustine was unable to attend through illness. But he has criticisms to make about Victorin's letter. For it included a summons to the Bishops of Mauritania. Now the Province of Mauritania had its own Primate, who of course was the proper person to summon his colleagues to a Council. Moreover, the order of the Bishops of the Province of Numidia, to which Augustine belonged, was wrongly given. His own name appearing higher in the list (namely, third) than he has any right to claim. Besides, Bishop Xantippus claims to be the Primate of Numidia; and is accustomed to issue summonses to Councils. Yet in Bishop Victorin's letter the name of Xantippus is left out. These anomalies create a suspicion in Augustine's mind that the letter purporting to be issued by Bishop Victorin must be a forgery. Meanwhile he begs Victorin to settle the question of precedence between himself and

[1] Letter 59.

Bishop Xantippus; so that the Church may know which of the two is the proper person to summon the Bishops of the Province to a Council. The letter concludes with a note that Augustine has sealed it with a ring representing the profile of a man.

The relation of the monk to the priesthood was already raising problems in the year 401. Two monks had left a religious community which was under Augustine's care and were claiming admission to the priesthood.[1] Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage, wrote to Augustine about them. Augustine feels bound to maintain that those who have deserted their calling as monks ought not to be placed among the clergy. To do this would provoke the criticism of the laity. There is a proverb which says, "a poor flute-player makes a good singer" (Malus choraula bonus symphoniacus est). There would soon be another proverb to the effect that "a bad monk makes a good cleric." This would grievously discredit the clergy. The truth is that a good monk rarely makes a good cleric. He does not possess the necessary qualifications.

Bishop Aurelius was evidently under the impression that these two monks had left the monastery with Augustine's approval. But this was not the case. Augustine had resisted their restlessness with all his power, but in vain. One of the two had already obtained ordination. As to the other, Augustine leaves the matter to Aurelius's wisdom, to act as he may judge best for the interests of the Church.

Further ecclesiastical irregularities are reported to have occurred within Augustine's own diocese. The rule of restricting a bishop's authority to his own diocese was in somewhat fluid state in the beginning of the fifth century.[2] A certain reader, Timothy, was ordained a sub-deacon at Sulsana, in the diocese of Hippo, against Bishop Augustine's advice and desire. Augustine

[1] Letter 60.

[2] Letter 63.

complains of this irregularity, but admits that it cannot be undone. The only question was whether Timothy still belonged to the diocese of Hippo. Augustine held that since he had been a reader in that diocese he belonged to it, and must not be encouraged by another bishop to transfer himself to another diocese.

It was clearly understood in the early fifth century and ruled by Canons[1] that a priest suspended from Communion by his own bishop could not be received into Communion in any other diocese until he was reconciled. Augustine considers this as a matter of course in his dealing with Quintian, a priest of the diocese of Carthage, whom his bishop, Aurelius, had suspended from Communion. Quintian wrote to Augustine proposing to pay a visit to Hippo. Augustine believed the priest to be innocent, but replied that he could not be received into Communion while suspended by his own Diocesan. Augustine has written to Aurelius in Quintian's behalf. But he cannot possibly write to Quintian's own congregation, as the priest desires him to do. If they write to him Augustine can reply. "But," asks Augustine, "how could I put myself forward uninvited to write to a people not committed to my care?"

There is, however, one matter on which Augustine will venture in this present letter to warn Quintian. Let him not scandalise the Church by reading in service writings which the Canon of the Church does not acknowledge. Augustine knows that incalculable mischief has been done that way by the Manichæans.

Quintian had warned Augustine not to receive into his monastery persons who came from Quintian's neighbourhood. Such practice was forbidden by the Canons. Augustine replies that he wonders how Quintian can appeal to the Canons when he himself ignores their ruling about books which may be read in church.

[1] Letter 64.

In the Synod at Hippo held in 393, which was a Council of great importance for the whole African Church, and over which Aurelius, the Archbishop of Carthage, presided, it was ruled that "besides the Canonical Scriptures, nothing shall be read in the Church under the title of Divine Writings."[1]

Augustine calls on Quintian to read the decisions of this Council carefully, and there he will find that the rule about not receiving persons from another diocese refers to clergy only and not to laymen. The rule does not mention monasteries. What it says is that no strange cleric may be received. In a more recent Synod (*i.e.* that held at Carthage, September 13, A.D. 401. See Hefele, II. 423) it was definitely resolved that a bishop may not ordain a monk from a strange monastery (*i.e.* a monastery belonging to another diocese), nor may he make him the superior of his own monastery (Canon 14).

As to the particular case which Quintian has in mind, that of a layman named Privatian, Augustine has not received him into his monastery, but has referred the case to Bishop Aurelius, and will abide by his decision.

Augustine shows profound anxiety[2] that the Church should never be accused of a mercenary spirit. A certain priest, Honoratus, died and a dispute arose about his property. It was claimed by the monastery of Thagaste, on the ground that the deceased had been a monk there. It was also claimed by the Church of Thiave, on the ground that he had been their priest. Alypius, Bishop of Thagaste, was willing that the Church of Thiave should have half. Augustine considers that the return of half will make it appear that the anxiety of Churchmen was only about the money. This will set the monastery in a false light. Augustine proposes that in future those who enter a monastery should relieve themselves of all temporal interests before they are received. This will

[1] Canon 36. Hefele, II. 400. Engl. Tr.
[2] Letter 83.

acquit the Community from any sordid suspicions. With regard to the property of a priest it should belong after his death to the church where he was ordained.

In a severe letter of rebuke to a young bishop,[1] his son in the faith, who had been living in a worldly and extravagant manner, Augustine refuses to hold communion with him. The young bishop had been successful in winning people to the Church, but was now alienating more than he had won. Augustine's independent action towards another bishop is noteworthy. He says "it cannot be that any bishop whatsoever of the Catholic Church should cease to be my colleague, so long as he has not been condemned by any ecclesiastical tribunal." Nevertheless he refuses to hold communion with him so long as the young bishop persists in worldly ways.

In a letter to Pope Cælestine, in 423, Augustine relates some of the troubles of his diocese.[2] It throws some light on the extent of the diocese of Hippo. There was a town called Fussala, situated some forty miles from Hippo, and on the borders of the diocese. It was under Augustine's charge. There had never been a bishop presiding there. The people were nearly all Donatists. The clergy whom Augustine sent to work there were brutally treated, beaten, blinded, murdered by the ferocious fanatics of the Sect. But in the end conversion of the people to Catholicism was secured.

Augustine accordingly looked out for a priest who knew the Punic speech, and found one suited for the work. The Primate of Numidia arrived to consecrate him, but for some reason unknown the Bishop-elect withdrew and refused consecration. Augustine was in great perplexity. Anxious not to give the aged Primate a long and fatiguing journey to no purpose, anxious also to carry into effect his scheme of making Fussala a diocese, he acted impulsively, and put forward a young reader of his own monastery, not even yet a priest, as

[1] Letter 85, A.D. 405. [2] Letter 209.

a suitable bishop for the people of Fussala. So the young reader, Antony, was consecrated.

Unhappily Antony proved most unsuitable to be a bishop. Serious accusations were made against him: charges of immorality, which could not be proved; charges of rapacious and aggressive conduct, which appeared to be true.

His case was tried before African Bishops and he was suspended from office until he had made restitution.

But Bishop Antony appears to have been a person of much plausibility. He insinuated himself into the good graces of the Primate who wrote favourably about him to Pope Boniface at Rome. Antony put in an appeal to Rome against the African Council which condemned him. They had been reluctant to act severely. They had taken into consideration his previous record, his youth and his inexperience. But he adroitly turned their leniency against them and charged them with inconsistency. Either he ought to be allowed to discharge his episcopal functions, or else he ought to have been deposed altogether. Pope Boniface had only heard one side of the case, and was ignorant of the realities. He wrote, but left the matter undecided. Meanwhile he died, and his successor Cælestine had to undertake it. The people of Fussala heard rumours that the decision of the Holy See was against them, that their young bishop was to be forced upon them by the authorities of the State. Consequently those converts to Catholicism expected to find themselves in a worse condition as Catholics than when they were members of the sect.

Augustine writes with great earnestness imploring Cælestine not to listen to Antony's representations. The people of Fussala had complained of Augustine to the Pope, for imposing upon them a Novice insufficiently tried. And Augustine acknowledges the justice of their complaint. He is so profoundly grieved by the unhappy result of his imprudent nomination that he thinks of resigning his own bishopric; a course which unless a

satisfactory solution is given at Rome, he shall feel compelled to take.

What answer Pope Cælestine made to these representations is unknown. It looks as if Bishop Antony were sent elsewhere.

But in the following year (434) a Council of the African Bishops was held at Carthage, in which the subject of Appeals to Rome was considered. The result of their deliberations was, that a letter was sent to Pope Cælestine desiring him not to accept appeals from African decisions, whether such appeals were made by priests or by bishops. They claimed that this was already settled by the Council of Nicæa. To receive appeals at Rome was an intrusion on the rights of the African Church.[1]

Much insight into the life of the primitive Church[2] is given in the account of a singular scene at Hippo in the Church of Peace in the year 426. Many clergy and laity were present. Augustine presided. He spoke of the uncertainties of mortal life and of the different ages of man He divided human life into the various stages of *infantia*, *pueritia*, *adolescentia*, *juventus*, and *senectus*.[3] There was no period beyond this. And he had reached the last of the ages of men.

He reminded the people of his experience that a bishop's death was often followed by disorders and contentions among the people. He quoted the case of the Church of Milevis, where this had been prevented. There the Bishop nominated his successor, and this nomination was after the Bishop's death carried into effect. There was, however, one objection to the course which the Bishop of Milevis had taken. For he only consulted the clergy and not the laity. Accordingly the laity felt themselves aggrieved. Augustine was anxious to avoid this mistake. He, therefore, indicated his desire to a meeting of clergy and laity together. He informed the

[1] Hefele, II. 315. [2] Letter 213. [3] Cf. p. 297.

assembly that he desired to have the priest Eraclius as his successor in the bishopric.

The people received the Bishop's words with acclamation. They shouted "God be thanked!" "Christ be praised!" "Long life to Augustine!" and repeated these exclamations over and over again. The highest number of repetitions recorded was thirty-eight.

When quiet was restored Augustine went on to explain that he was anxious to avoid the error which had occurred at his own nomination. He had been consecrated Bishop during the lifetime of Valerius, and shared the See of Hippo with him. Augustine confesses that he did not know at the time that this was forbidden by the Council of Nicæa.

He was, therefore, anxious that what was abnormal in his own ecclesiastical experience should not be reiterated in that of his successor. To this the people as before expressed their ready and vociferous approval.

When silence was again secured Augustine explained that Eraclius was to remain a priest, and to be consecrated bishop when the See of Hippo became vacant. For all practical purposes Augustine was appointing Eraclius as what we should now call Archdeacon, with, however, the right of succession to the Bishopric after Augustine's death.

Meanwhile by this arrangement Augustine hoped to secure for himself further time for his writings. He had already some years previously come to an agreement with his people that for five days in the week he should be left to his studies uninterrupted by avoidable intrusions. This was especially because the Councils of Numidia and of Carthage had expressly enjoined upon him the duty of Scriptural Exposition. The people of Hippo had readily agreed to this, but they soon failed to observe their part of the agreement. They invaded Augustine's studies as persistently as before. He hoped, however, that the nomination of Eraclius, whom in the Name of Christ he now appointed to be his episcopal

successor, would induce his diocese to allow their Bishop to transfer to another a considerable portion of the burden of his occupations.

This arrangement was made in the year 426, only four years before Augustine's death.

It should be noticed that the title *Servus Servorum Dei* is claimed by Augustine and applied to himself.[1]

Augustine in his old age was witness to the misuse by younger men of episcopal authority. A youthful bishop named Auxilius had excommunicated Classician and all his household. This wholesale and indiscriminating anathema raised some very serious ecclesiastical and spiritual problems. The days when men acquiesced in the interdict had not yet arrived.[2] The action of Auxilius caused grave offence. Augustine wrote to expostulate with the young bishop. Classician had appealed to him. Augustine was not the young bishop's ecclesiastical superior, for the Bishop of Hippo was not head of the Province. The ecclesiastical divisions of Africa accorded with the Roman Provincial Administration. The head of the ecclesiastical Province was the See of Carthage. Augustine in his letter to Bishop Auxilius asks for justification, either from reason or from Scripture, for anathematising a son for the sins of his father. Augustine points out that while a household is under excommunication no member of it can receive the washing of regeneration, even although he be in peril of death. It is the spiritual disaster of dying unbaptised which terrifies the writer's soul: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven."

Auxilius may be aware of precedents for the excommunication of entire families. But perhaps the bishops who have so acted may be able to give, if asked, an explanation. Augustine confesses that he has never dared to venture on such a course. He is an old man now

[1] Letter 217. [2] Letter 250.

and he inquires of one who is young; he has been a bishop for many many years, he addresses a bishop who has scarcely had one short year's experience. He cannot refrain from asking: How it can be just to let the innocent suffer for the guilty? If Classician is an offender, that is not his children's fault. Why should they be permitted to perish unbaptised? But Augustine does not even think that Classician himself deserved to be excommunicated. Augustine thinks it necessary to warn his colleague that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

How deeply this instance of ecclesiastical injustice moved Augustine's whole soul is clear from his determination to bring the matter before the Council of the Province; and if necessary also before the Apostolic See. It raised the whole problem of the validity of an unjust excommunication. On this point Augustine's judgment was certain. He placed it on record in terms which have taken effect down the centuries.

"One thing I say deliberately as an unquestionable truth, that if any believer has been wrongfully excommunicated, the sentence will do harm rather to him who pronounces it than to him who suffers this wrong. For it is by the Holy Spirit dwelling in holy persons that any one is loosed or bound, and He inflicts unmerited punishment upon no one; for by Him the love which worketh not evil is shed abroad in our hearts."

This passage was incorporated by the Canonist Gratian, who died in 1158, into his work on the Canons of the Church. There it remained as a warning against the dangers of the misuse of ecclesiastical power.[1]

It was not unusual in the fifth century for orphan children to be placed under the guardianship of the Church.[2] Several letters of Augustine are concerned with the guardianship of a girl left by her father when dying in

[1] *See* Sebastian Berardus. *Gratiani Canones*, 1757. Tom. IV. p. 400.

[2] Letters 252 to 255.

the Church's care. Augustine received letters asking him to dispose of her in marriage. He has a high sense of episcopal fatherhood in the Catholic Church. She must be placed where she will be a faithful supporter of the Church. At present she wants to enter a Convent, but is too young to have any serious opinions of her own on the subject. One thing is certain: being a Christian she can marry no one except a Christian. No Pagan need apply.

Most appropriately after this comes Augustine's teaching on Friendship.[1]

It is in a letter written to a friend of long standing, but who up to the present had been of a different religion. One of whom Augustine writes "I had him not, so long as I held him not in Christ." Augustine quotes with approval Cicero's definition of Friendship: "Friendship is loving agreement in things human and divine." Hitherto Martian and Augustine had often agreed in things human, but not in things divine. And Augustine is convinced that friends who do not agree in things divine cannot have complete and perfect agreement even in things human. For certainly he who despises things divine regards things human otherwise than he ought to do. He cannot love a man rightly who loves not Him Who created man. It is by things divine that things human are rightly tested. (*Cf.* Augustine's remarks on Friendship in the *Confessions*, Bk. iv. 4. 7.)

[1] Letter 258.

CHAPTER XI

LETTERS OF THE CLOSING YEARS

It has been given to many strenuous lives to close in a period of peace. This is a privilege which Augustine was denied.

He had long since been called upon to strengthen the faith of others whom the deplorable anarchy in Church and State perplexed.[1] In the year before the Fall of Rome he received a letter from a priest, Victorian, informing him of the calamities inflicted by the Gothic invaders on Italy and on Spain. Augustine could but reply that the whole world had become a scene of slaughter. Hardly any portion was exempt. Quite recently even the monasteries in the solitudes of Egypt, chosen expressly for their immunity from strife, had been attacked by barbarians, and the monks had been murdered. Even here in Hippo, adds the Bishop, where barbarians had not reached, the Donatist Clergy and the Circumcellions have acted worse than barbarians.

But, observes Augustine, these things are predicted. We ought not to believe when they are read of and complain when they are realised.

After all, he asks, ought Christian people to complain of the Divine discipline? Are we better than the Three Children who entered the furnace? Or better than Daniel who was so afflicted? Augustine reminds his correspondent of the story of the Maccabees. That story of patriotic faith should be read believingly, and

[1] Letter 3, A.D. 409.

taught believingly. So far as it lies in the priest's power let him warn men not to murmur against God in temptations and tribulations. Victorian says that good and faithful servants of God have been slain. Augustine answers: after all, does it make much difference in what manner they died? Is not the essential thing not in what circumstances, but with what character, they went forth to their Lord?

Here are the lines of thought which Augustine, when Rome had fallen, worked out in the treatise concerning the City of God.

Augustine had witnessed with his own eyes the reversals of social position, the overthrow of distinguished houses, the ruin of families, the refugees to Africa from barbaric violence. But now the storm was drawing nearer to his own land. Soon he would be called upon to apply to himself the consolations and the principles by which he had strengthened others.

Count Boniface was the last of the great military chiefs in Africa during Augustine's episcopate. Like all the others he came under the Bishop's influence. To Augustine the soldier looked for instruction on the state of African ecclesiastical affairs, and for guidance in matters affecting his own personal religion. The important Letter 185, a treatise on the treatment of the Donatists, dealing with the application of Imperial laws to African cases, was written for the enlightenment of Boniface. This was in 417. But the soldier wanted more than information concerning ecclesiastical conditions. He wanted help about eternal things; something on spiritual themes. The incongruousness of war with the Christian ideals had roused misgivings at times in the officer's conscience. He wanted the guidance of the priest.

Augustine turned immediately from other duties to respond to the soldier's need.[1]

[1] Letter 189, A.D. 418.

He counsels Boniface to have no misgivings whether a man can please God in the profession of a soldier. He refers to the instance of the Centurion whose faith Christ commended; and of Cornelius whose alms were accepted and whose prayers were heard. He reminds Boniface that the advice S. John Baptist gave to the soldiers who consulted him was not to lay aside their weapons but to regulate their power.

He acknowledges that there were higher missions than the secular calling: but added that God had endowed individuals with different gifts. He does not conceal for a moment his belief in the superiority of the ascetic life. But each has its place in the social order. They fight for you by praying against invisible foes: and you labour for them by fighting against visible barbarians. Would that the world were otherwise. But the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven are here being proved by trials.

When, therefore, Boniface prepares for the battle let him remember that his physical courage is a gift of God, and then he will not use the gift against its Giver.

If faith is to be kept even with an enemy against whom we fight, how much more with a friend in whose behalf we are fighting.

Augustine adds to this some thoughts on peace. The intention of war is peace. War may be inevitable. But the aim is that God will deliver from its necessity, and preserve us in peace. For peace does not exist for the promotion of war, but war is waged for the sake of peace. Therefore let Boniface be a peacemaker even in the midst of the strife, and strive simply for the sake of peace.

The thought of temporal peace (*pax humana*) leads Augustine to add a word on heavenly peace (*pax divina*). Let Boniface aim at the conquest of himself. It is a shame if he who cannot be overcome by the sword is overcome by passion or by wine. Let him persevere in

good actions and in prayer, remembering that human life on earth is one long temptation ; and let him learn to forgive others as he himself asks to be forgiven.

Boniface knew well the intrigues of the Court and the moral conditions of the camp. He had himself suffered from unscrupulous opponents who misrepresented him to the Emperor and did their best to secure his ruin. There were times when the soldier's spirit revolted in disgust from the treatment he received. Times also when the peaceful ideals of the Christian religious life exercised over him a wonderful fascination. When in addition to all this, he had the misfortune to lose his wife a sense of the vanity of all earthly hopes almost overwhelmed him.

He was resting at the time in a little African town in company with the Bishops,[1] Augustine and Alypius. The three were in quiet familiar conversation. In the course of it Count Boniface spoke of his longing to be released from military occupations and to spend the rest of his days for the welfare of his soul in some monastic community of the servants of God.

To these proposals of Count Boniface Augustine gave no encouragement. He strongly dissuaded the General from adopting any such course. Quite possibly this was in part because he knew the soldier's character and regarded the proposal as prompted by an emotional impulse, a feeling of disgust, and a sense of reaction, which would in all probability vary and pass away. But what determined Augustine's dissuasion was his profound consciousness of the needs of the Church in Africa, and indeed of the whole country. Threatened as it was with invasion of Huns and Vandals, Augustine felt that Count Boniface could do his age more service in the army than in the monastery. To lead the Roman forces to victory over these fierce barbarians would secure the whole of the African Church the blessedness of peace.

[1] Letter 220, A.D. 427.

Augustine reminded Boniface that perseverance in his profession need not conflict with the interests of his own soul. It was possible to lead an austere self-disciplined life in the camp as well as in the monastery. It was better for the larger interests of the Church that the soldier's personal preference should be sacrificed.

Boniface accepted Augustine's direction. He returned to the soldier's work: but not to a life of Christian self-discipline and austerity. His conduct quickly proved that his aspiration towards monastic life was but a passing emotion of disgust with the world, rather than a real fitness for perpetual devotion and religious self-surrender. Rumours sadly to Boniface's discredit spread abroad. He had speedily married again; and rumour said that to this second marriage he was by no means faithful.

Augustine was profoundly grieved. He wrote[1] for Boniface a letter full of affectionate sympathy, discretion and distress. He says that it is difficult for Boniface's friends to be his advisers concerning his soul, not because they have not the will, but for lack of opportunity. Augustine himself has not been given a suitable occasion. When Boniface saw him last at Hippo the Bishop was so exhausted and so ill that he could scarcely speak. Nor could he venture to write for lack of a trustworthy messenger. A letter might fall into other hands than those for whom it was intended.

Then Augustine recalls to the soldier's memory their conversation on the monastic life: contrasts it with this second marriage, which, after Boniface's express intention, ought never to have been entered upon. The Bishop notes, however, the one relieving fact that Boniface refused to marry the woman until she had become a Catholic. But, on the other hand, the Count has permitted heresy to prevail in his own household so far as to allow his daughter to be baptised by those who deny

[1] Letter 220.

that Jesus is the Son of God. Various other discreditable rumours are abroad which Augustine trusts cannot be true.

However that may be, Boniface is a Christian. He has a heart. He fears God. Let him realise what Augustine is reluctant to inscribe in words. The Bishop implores the Count in the language of Ecclesiasticus: "Make no tarrying to turn to the Lord; and put not off from day to day."

But there is another cause for deep distress. Augustine had advised the Count to keep to his military profession because he trusted that the soldier would be the protector of the African Church and country. Most unhappily that hope was being frustrated. Boniface, in his anger at finding himself maligned and distrusted in Rome, was himself allowing the Vandals to enter Africa.

The Count appears to have taken this course in self-defence, to secure himself against his opponents in Ravenna by obtaining allies in Africa. But it was a desperate and destructive policy. It sacrificed the peace of Africa to the ambitions of the individual. Augustine's tone is sorrowful, reproachful, pathetic, as he thinks of the misery which these ferocious hordes are inflicting on his native land while Count Boniface takes no steps to avert the calamity.

If Boniface adopts the excuse that the responsibility for these misfortunes lies with the men who tried to ruin him, let him remember that he is a Christian, and that the ultimate question is how it all appears in the sight of God. I speak, says Augustine, to a Christian man. Do not render evil for good or evil for evil. From the standpoint of worldly success Augustine has no advice to give. But regarded from the standpoint of Religion, Boniface must consider his own salvation, and lay to heart the question: What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world while he injures his own soul? Augustine reads him a lesson from 1 John ii. 15–17: "Love not the world . . ."

It is a beautiful letter in many ways. Full of tact, consideration, forbearance, delicacy, yet strong in its lofty principle and its firm rebuke. A man of Boniface's temperament could not receive such a letter unmoved.

It did affect him. That we know. He tried to remedy the evil he had permitted. But it was one thing to let the barbarians in, another to drive them out.

It is singular to find in the personal names of the fifth century anticipations of forms which have been commonly regarded as a peculiarity of the Puritanism of the seventeenth century. Thus we find a person bearing the name of *What-God-wills* ("Quod vult deus").[1]

What-God-wills wrote a letter begging Augustine to compile a dictionary of Heresies, or catalogue of errors which men have held concerning the Christian Religion.

The reply is directed in the following terms:[2] "Augustine, Bishop, to his most beloved son and fellow deacon What-God-wills." Augustine is not at all disposed to write *de omnibus hæresibus.* There are already in existence such works as What-God-wills desires Augustine to compile. There is the book compiled by Bishop Philastrius, whom Augustine remembers to have met at Milan with S. Ambrose. Philastrius numbers twenty-eight heresies among the Jews before the Incarnation and 128 since. Then there is the book by Bishop Epiphanius, who gives the sum total of the heresies as eighty. These diversities show how necessary it is to define the term heresy. And such definition is difficult. Augustine thinks he had better send a copy of Epiphanius's book to Carthage in order to have it there translated into Latin. For Epiphanius is the more learned writer of the two.

What-God-wills was not satisfied with this reply.[3] He renewed his request that Augustine should undertake such a work. He did not consider that works composed in Greek could meet the case.

[1] Letter 221. [2] Letter 222. [3] Letter 223.

Augustine thereupon agreed to make the attempt when the time of leisure should arrive.[1] But he explains how many works he has on hand.[2]

The Vandal invasion of North Africa created many a problem for the panic-stricken Churches. The terror of the Vandal was felt everywhere. Throngs of people fled away from their homes to seek safety and protection in the fortified places. The disappearance of many of the laity from the Churches affected the clergy also. They began to ask whether they were bound to remain? The Bishop Honoratus wrote to the Bishop Augustine for his opinion on this.

Augustine replies[3] that he has already sent an answer about it to Bishop What-God-wills. We whose Ministry is necessary to the people of God must say, let God be our protection and our fortified place.

This advice, however, must be blended with the injunction, "if they persecute you in one city flee to another," also with the example of S. Paul's escape by a window in a basket. Let the ministers of Christ's Word and Sacraments act in accordance with His orders or permissions. This applies especially in cases where the clergy in particular are the objects of persecution. But when the danger is common to all sections of the Church (Augustine distinguishes them as three: bishops, clergy and laity) then those who need the ministry should not be deserted by them. Either let all alike take refuge in a fortified place, or if for some of the laity this is impossible, let the clergy remain and serve their spiritual needs.

Bishop Honoratus saw no advantage in remaining at his post. It would only be to witness the sufferings of others which he could not prevent, and to incur brutal treatment for himself.

Augustine pointed out that future events were quite

[1] Letter 224.
[2] See book *De hæresibus*, Tom. VI.
[3] Letter 228.

uncertain, and urged that a certain duty ought not to be abandoned for an uncertain event. It must not be suspected that the clergy were overcome by fear.

At the same time there are cases when flight is permissible. If the people have fled and no one is left to be ministered to; or if the ministry can be adequately fulfilled by others who have not the same reason for flight; if persecution is specially directed against particular clergy, as was the case with Athanasius: under all these circumstances the flight of a priest is permissible. While the text about fleeing to another city is remembered, the warning about the hireling who fleeth because he careth not for the sheep must never be forgotten. There is the awful danger of apostacy among those who are deprived of the daily ministry of the Lord's Body.

Augustine points out that periods of calamity are generally accompanied, when things reach their very worst, by a revival of religious needs. When no escape from death seems possible many people will beg to be baptised, or to be reconciled, or to be received to penitence. All will require consolation and the help of the Sacraments. If the clergy have fled, think of the awful consequence to those who die unregenerate and unforgiven. See what the fear of temporal evils can produce when it leads men to incur evils which are eternal.

The sailors and the officers must not desert the ship. They ought to be the last to leave it.

The correspondence between Darius and Augustine[1] is another example of the Bishop's influence over distinguished officers of State. Augustine had never met Darius, but had corresponded with him. Darius had rendered signal service to the State by securing a truce in Africa with the Vandals. The Bishop wrote regretting that weakness and age prevented him from visiting Darius, but warmly congratulating him on being the

[1] Letters 229–231.

providential instrument for averting bloodshed. Darius replied with expressions of veneration for Augustine's gifts and character.[1] Like Augustine, he is profoundly thankful that war is at any rate postponed, and earnestly hopes for peace. He has seen some of the Bishop's writings on various subjects, and asks for a copy of Augustine's *Confessions*. He tells Augustine the story how King Abgarus of Edessa wrote a Letter to Christ, and of the reply which the King received. He asks Augustine to write again; sends salutations from one named Verimodus; and sends also certain medicines valuable for alleviating pain and for the cure of disease (he does not mention what they were), through the hands of Lazarus a priest.

Augustine acknowledging this letter has much to say on human praise. He is by no means insensible to the increasing influence which his writings acquire through the distinguished statesman's support. Darius belonged to a family whose traditions had been Christian for some generations, yet he has come to understand the Pagan religion through Augustine's criticisms upon it as he never understood it before. This may very likely be a reference to the great work on the City of God. Augustine then sends his Confessions, accompanying the gift with the following words:[2]

"Accept the book containing my *Confessions*. . . . In these behold me that you may not praise me beyond what I am. In these believe what is said of me, not by others, but by myself. In these contemplate me, and see what I have been in myself by myself. And if anything in me please you, join me, because of it, in praising Him to Whom, and not to myself, I desire praise to be given. For He hath made us and not we ourselves: indeed, we had destroyed ourselves, but He Who made us has made us anew. When, however, you find me in these books, pray for me that I may not fail,

[1] Letter 230. [2] Letter 231. Cunningham's translation.

but be perfected. Pray, my son, pray. I feel what I say; I know what I ask."

Augustine goes further than Darius requested and sends other of his writings, including his works on Faith in things not seen, on Patience, on Self-control, on Providence, as well as the Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Charity.

In a letter written in the closing period of his life[1] the great theologian is found engaged in the final revision of his writings. The result appeared in his *Retractations*. This was not a recantation but a reconsideration. Until this task was undertaken Augustine did not realise how many works he had composed. He finds the number to be 232, excluding Letters and Sermons.

Meanwhile the prospect darkened. The Vandal invasion was turning North Africa into a wilderness. The news was constantly of increasing and unrelieved disaster. Hippo was crowded with refugees who bore terrible witness to barbaric cruelty. Augustine's letters will not guide us any more. We find the sequel in the pages of his faithful companion Bishop Possidius. Churches were burnt, convents ravaged, clergy slain. Then amid the universal desolation stood out three strongly fortified places: Carthage, Cirta and Hippo.

Count Boniface's old success entirely deserted him. Finally, he took refuge behind the walls of Hippo, the last entrenchment possible between the enemy and the sea.

Augustine's last outlook on the prospects of the African Church must have been heartrending. For forty-one years this greatest of theologians had concentrated all his brilliant powers in building up and blending together the discordant elements of that afflicted and divided portion of the Catholic Church. And now he gazed on the sorrowful wreck and ruin of

[1] Letter 225.

all his work. Yet with these crushing facts before his eyes we are assured that there escaped him no utterance of despair. It was a Divine retribution on a people's misdeeds.[1] "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and true is Thy judgment." Salvian says that the Franks were liars, but they were hospitable; the Saxons cruel, but they reverenced a woman; of the Africans he has no redeeming word to say. An African was a synonym for immorality.[2]

Augustine preached continually to the crowds within the besieged city,[3] while the numbers gradually thinned by disease and death. He laboured to provide for the wants of the destitute refugees.

Then he retired from works of charity to the Bishop's House. And there he wrote his last word in defence of the doctrine of Grace.

He threw himself earnestly into an elaborate refutation of the Pelagian theories of Julian of Eclanum, the ablest opponent of the Church's faith. He wrote with extraordinary acuteness, and with all the force of matured dialectic skill, a work which bears no trace of the agitated conditions surrounding the aged writer's dwelling. It might have been composed in the studious quiet of some uninvaded solitude rather than in the perils and commotion of a siege. The only sign of trouble is that it was left a mere fragment of his full intentions. This concentration sprang from no insensibility, but from the wonderful detachment of his religious nature.[4]

Then, having gone as far as circumstances would allow, he laid the unfinished work aside and turned his judgment within. This had been his custom all along. Never since his conversion had the inner life become neglected.

His biographer says that Augustine would often recall

[1] Possidius. [2] *De Gub. Dei.* 7. 15. 64.
[3] Baronius Annals, A.D. 428.
[4] See the Chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine.

the words of Ambrose, whose character and influence were among the most sacred associations of his life. He would describe how when the great Archbishop of Milan lay dying, and his friends entreated him to plead for a longer extension of life, he answered: "I have not so lived that I need be ashamed to continue among you: but neither am I afraid to die, for our Lord is merciful."

As the siege of Hippo advanced Augustine had forebodings of his own decease. "You know," he said to them one day at table, "that I have besought God in this time of our misfortune, either to free this city from the besieging hosts; or, if it please Him otherwise, either to make His servants strong to bear His will, or to release me from this world and take me to Himself." And, so saying, he taught them all to pray that it might be so.

And when the third month of the siege began, he fell sick of fever and his strength faded away. And as he lay in the illness from which he was not to recover, he prayed with fervent intercessions for that city where he had lived in all simplicity for forty-one years. And when his people knew that he was dying they insisted that certain possessed with mental infirmity should be brought to his bedside; that he should place his hands upon them, and pray that they might recover: a prayer which they say was granted.

But the end was near. He now begged to be left alone in his chamber, uninterrupted except at the necessary visits of his physician and at the intervals of taking food. There alone with God Augustine prepared himself for death. He ordered the Penitential Psalms to be written out in large characters and hung upon the wall beside his bed. And so he spent the last days of his infirmity, reading those outpourings of a repentance like his own, repeatedly, and with many tears. So passed the closing ten days of his career. He died, at the age of seventy-six, in the presence of the Community

which he had created. Possidius says he made no will: for he had no property to leave, with the sole exception of his library and his writings, which he committed to the keeping of the Church.

Augustine's life was mercifully ended before his city fell. After holding out for fourteen months, Count Boniface eventually escaped by sea, leaving the unhappy city to destruction by the victorious Vandals. Baronius lays much stress on the fact that Augustine's library was preserved during the sack of Hippo. Considering that the besiegers were Arians, the escape of Augustine's books from the flames is little less than marvellous.

Such was the condition in which the last Bishop of Hippo, the greatest teacher in Christendom since the Apostles, passed away.

INDEX

I. SUBJECTS

ÆLIAN, proconsul at Carthage, 79
African character, 261–2
Altare, 88, 280
Ambrose, 15, 69, 95
Anthropomorphic, 69
Apollonius of Tyana, 51
Apostolic Chair, 89
Apuleius, 15
Arianism, 63
Athanasius, 15
Augustine—
  changes of opinion, 9, 10
  letters, subjects treated in, 10–12
  ——, recipients of, 12, 21
  his place among contemporary Bishops, 13, 14
  authors quoted by—Pagan, 14
  ,, ,, by—Christian, 15
  ,, ,, by—Apocryphal, 16, 17
  his ordination, 29, 30
  as a preacher, 37, 39
  his consecration, 41
  Doctrine of Grace, 131 ff.
  and Jerome, 216, 254
  and his coadjutor, 314, 315
  relations with the Popes, 22, 82, 87, 91
  allegorising tendency, 69
  and authority, 69
  on the Resurrection-Body, 70
Augustine's writings, references to—
  Soliloquies, 25, 26, 27, 225
  Confessions, 29, 34, 35, 37, 43, 59, 131, 133, 185, 192, 301, 318, 328
  De Beata Vita, 35
  De Vera Religione, 36, 196, 198
Augustine's writings, references to—
  Contra litt. Petit., 43
  City of God, 48, 59, 70, 71, 155, 297
  Sermon 150, 53
  Against Cresconius, 98, 101
  De Gestis cum Emerito, 98
  De Libero Arbitrio, 131, 196, 304
  De Gratia et lib. arbitr., 134, 169
  Retract, 136, 329
  Contra Julian., 137
  De natura et gratia, 137, 151, 156
  The Spirit and the Letter, 144, 157, 171
  De Peccat. Remissione, 151
  Literal interpretation of Genesis, 155, 161
  De Gestis Pelagii, 156
  On Correction and Grace, 173, 182
  On the Trinity, 71, 195
  On the Psalms, 225

Baptism, 103
—— of Infants, 154, 290–94
—— of the Apostles, 96, 258
—— of Christ, 72, 73
Biblical exposition, 185–215
Boniface (Count), 320–25

Cæcilian (Bishop of Carthage), 78, 79, 88
Care for the Dead, 33
Carthage (Bishops of), 97
Cassian, 76
Casuistry, 303–5
Catholic, 186

Celestius, 140, 145
Ceremonial, 288, 289
Church, at Hippo, 31–37
—— and State, 90
Cicero, 14, 52, 54
Circumcellions, 40, 79, 102
Coercion, 79, 104, 105, 107, 113, 116
Communion, fast before, 281–7
Communities, of women, 273–4
——, of men, 303, 306–8
Community Life, 34, 35
Conference at Carthage, 110, 118, 119
Constantine (Emperor), 78, 88
Constantine (Cirta), capital of Numidia, 99
Council, at Rome (313), 79
——, at Arles (314), 88–93
——, at Carthage (326), 80
——, at Nicæa, 41–2
——, at Carthage (416), 148
——, at Milevis (416), 148, 149
——, at Diospolis, 143, 150, 151, 159
——, at Trent, 131
Creationism, 74, 161
Crispin, 101
Cyprian, 15

Demetrius, 271
Democritus, 54
Desolation (cry from the Cross), 187
Diocesan affairs, 301–18
Diocletian persecution, 77
Diospolis (synod of). *See* Councils.
Donatists, 76–125
——, outlines of the controversy, 76–82
Donatus (proconsul), 108
—— (head of Donatists), 78
Duchesne, 141, 227

Ecclesia Africana, 31
Episcopal Succession, 97
—— in Rome, 99
Eschatology, 203–7
Eucharist, 276–300
——, a sacrifice, 203
Evodius, 70

Excommunication, 316, 317

Felix (of Aptunga), 79
Fortunatian, 69
Fortunius, 94 ff.

Galatians (dispute between SS. Peter and Paul), 218 ff.
Grace, doctrine of, 126–84
Gratian, 317

Hammond (Definitions of Faith), 41
Heraclian, 119
Homoousion, 64
Horace, 14
Humility, 53

Incarnation, 56–60, 75
—— (*See also* Virgin Birth)
Innocent (Pope), 150 ff.
Intermediate state, 211–15

Jerome, 74, 140 ff.
Jews, 59
John (Bishop of Jerusalem), 140, 151
Julian, 81

Lucilla, 78, 92

Macarius, 76–82, 84, 95 *n.*
Majorinus, 78, 88
Marinus (Consul), 119
Materialistic conceptions of Deity, 68, 69
Maximin, 83 ff.
Maximinionists, 78, 97
Maximus (Physician), 74
Melchiades (Bishop of Rome), 88, 90, 92
Mensurius, 77, 78
Ministries, 190–1
Monks and priests, 307

Nature and grace, 74

Optatus, 81, 160 f.
Origen, 74, 227, 241
Origin of the soul, 241–54
Original sin, 144
Orosius, 74, 141, 142, 244

Pagan, criticisms on Christianity; its late arrival, 50
—— mythology, 48
—— Scriptures contrasted with Christian, 50
—— Temples, destroyed, 49; closed, 59; converted into churches,
Paganism, 45–62
Papal claims, 90, 91–93
Pascentius, 64 ff.
Pelagianism, 74, 129–31
Pelagius, letter to Demetrius, 126–9
—— life of, 139–43
Persona, 66
Plato, 14
Platonists, 53
Plotinus, 14, 54
Porphyry, 15, 50
Possidius (Bishop of Calama), 101, 329, 330
Predestination, 181
Principatus, 88, 89
Priscillianists, 74
Procopius, 76
Proculeian, 85 ff.
Punic names, 46

Regeneration, 144–54
Resurrection Body, 70, 207, 208
Reunion, 84, 85, 87, 94
Rome, fall of, 243, 263
Rufinus, 241

Sabbath and Sunday, distinction between, 276–81
Sacrament, 299
Sacrifice, 293–8
—— of Eucharist, 298
Secundus (Bishop of Tigisis), 91
Seneca, 117
Soul (*see* Origin of), 74
Spirits in prison, 197, 202
Succession. *See* Episcopal.
Swete, Professor, Essays on Church and Ministry, 82

Terence, 14
Tertullian, 161
Tradition, "non scripta sed Tradita," 282
Traducianism, 161
Trinity, 63–76

Valerius (Bishop), 85
Validity, 82, 103
Virgin Birth, 55, 56, 62, 66, 152, 162, 186, 195, 198
Virgins, Parable of, 188
Vision of God, 266–70

War and Peace, 321
Women, letters to, 255–75

Zosimus (Pope), 160

II. AUGUSTINE'S CORRESPONDENTS

Alypius (Bishop), Letter 29, p. 37–40; L. 83, p. 311
Apringius, L. 134, p. 113
Aurelius (Bishop), L. 22, p. 31; L. 41, p. 43; L. 60, p. 309
Auxilius (Bishop), L. 250, p. 316

Benenatus, L. 253, 254, p. 317
Boniface (Bishop), L. 98, p. 290–2
—— (Count), L. 185, p. 121–5

Cæcilian (statesman), L. 151, p. 120
Cælestine (Pope), L. 209, p. 312–14
Casulan, L. 36, p. 276–80
Catholics of Hippo, L. 78, p. 306–7
Consentius, L. 119, 120, p. 67; L. 205, p. 207–9

Dardanus, L. 187, p. 201–2
Deogratias (Priest), L. 102, p. 50, 295–6.
Deuterius (Bishop), L. 236, p. 62
Dioscorus, L. 118, p. 52
Donatists, L. 105, p. 169; L. 141, p. 111
Donatus (Proconsul), L. 100, p. 109
—— (Priest), L. 173, p. 119

Ecdicia, L. 262, p. 255
Emeritus (Donatist), L. 87, p. 101
Evodius, L. 158, p. 192; L. 159, p. 193; L. 161, p. 195; L. 162, p. 198; L. 164, p. 199-201; L. 169, p. 71–4

Fabiola, L. 267, p. 274.
Felicitas, L. 210, 211, p. 273
Felix, L. 252, p. 317
Festus, L. 89, p. 102–4
Florentina, L. 266, p. 260
Florentinus, L. 232, p. 59
Fortunatian (Bishop), L. 148, p. 69

Generosus, L. 53, p. 99–100
Genethlius, L. 51, p. 97
Glorius (and others), L. 43, p. 87–93; L. 44, p. 94–6

Hesychius, L. 199, p. 203–6
Hilary, L. 157, p. 143–8
Honoratus, L. 140, p. 185–9

Innocent (Pope), L. 175, 176, p. 148

Januarius (Donatist Bishop), L. 88, p. 101
Januarius, L. 54, p. 281–7; L. 55, p. 287–9
Jerome, L. 28, p. 217; L. 40, p. 221; L. 71, p. 123; L. 73, p. 225; L. 76, p. 232; L. 82, p. 234–9; L. 166, p. 244–8; L. 167, p. 248
John (Bishop of Jerusalem), L. 179, p. 151
Juliana, L. 188, p. 271–2

Licentius, L. 26, p. 34
Longinian, L. 133, 134, 135, p. 60–1

Macedonius, L. 152, p. 114; L. 153, p. 115–7; L. 153, 154, 155, p. 118
Marcellinus, L. 138, p. 209, 296–8; L. 129, p. 111; L. 139, p. 113, 211; L. 143, p. 210–14
Martian, L. 258, p. 318
Maxima, L. 264, p. 258
Maximin (Donatist Bishop) L. 23, p. 83–4
Maximus, L. 16, p. 46; L. 17, p. 47; L. 170, p. 74–5

Nebridius, L. 3–14, p. 24–9; L. 11, p. 63
Nectarius, L. 91, p. 48

Optatus (Bishop), L. 190, p. 249–51; L. 202, p. 252

Pascentius, L. 238, p. 63–5; L. 239, p. 66
Paulina, L. 147, p. 267–70
Paulinus (Bishop of Nola), L. 24, p. 33; L. 27, p. 36; L. 31, p. 41; L. 149, p. 190; L. 186, p. 33, 156–60
Paulus (Bishop), L. 85, p. 312
Peter and Abraham, L. 184 B, p. 154
Pinian and Melania, L. 124, p. 260; L. 126, p. 262
Proba, L. 130, p. 264–7
Procopius and Cylinnius (Bishops), L. 219, p. 76
Proculeian (Donatist Bishop), L. 33, p. 85
Profuturus (Bishop), L. 38, p. 43
Publicola, L. 46, p. 303; L. 47, p. 304–5

Quintian, L. 64, p. 310

Rusticus, L. 255, p. 317

Sapida, L. 263, p. 257
Seleuciana, L. 265, p. 258
Severus, L. 62, 63, p. 309
Sixtus (Priest), L. 191, p. 163; L. 194, p. 163–7

Valentinus (Abbot), L. 214, p. 168
Valerius (Bishop), L. 21, p. 29–31
Victorian (Priest), p. 319
Victorin (Bishop), L. 59, p. 308
Vincent, L. 93, p. 104–8
Vitalis, L. 217, p. 178–81, 316
Volusian, L. 135, 136, 137, p. 55–8

Printed in Great Britain by R Clay & Sons, Ltd., London and Bungay

S.P.C.K.
BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

Translations of Early Documents

A Series of texts important for the study of Christian origins. Under the Joint Editorship of the Rev. W. O. E. Oesterley, D.D., and the Rev. Canon G. H. Box, M.A.

The object of this Series is to provide short, cheap, and handy textbooks for students, either working by themselves or in classes. The aim is to furnish in translations important texts unencumbered by commentary or elaborate notes, which can be had in larger works.

EXTRACTS FROM PRESS NOTICES.

The Times Literary Supplement says: "These Jewish Apocalypses have a direct relation to the thought and religious ideals which confronted primitive Christianity in Palestine, and not only for their own sakes, but for their influence on the New Testament and Apostolic Christianity they deserve careful attention. Handbooks at once so scholarly and so readable will be welcomed by all interested in Christian origins."

The Church Quarterly Review says: "To the theological student who is anxious to know something of the circumstances and thought of the time during which Christianity grew up, and of the Jewish environment of the teaching of our Lord and the Apostles, there is no class of books more valuable than the later Jewish Apocrypha."

The Church Times says: "The names of the Editors are a guarantee of trustworthy and expert scholarship, and their work has been admirably performed."

The Tablet says: "A valuable series . . . well brought out and should prove useful to students."

Catholic Book Notes says: "The S P.C.K. is to be congratulated on its various series of cheap and useful books for students."

Translations of Early Documents

FIRST SERIES—Palestinian-Jewish and Cognate Texts (Pre-Rabbinic)

1. **Jewish Documents in the Time of Ezra**
   Translated from the Aramaic by A. E. COWLEY, Litt.D., Sub-Librarian of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. 4*s.* 6*d.* net.

2. **The Wisdom of Ben-Sira (Ecclesiasticus)**
   By the Rev. W. O. E. OESTERLEY, D.D., Vicar of St. Alban's, Bedford Park, W.; Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of London. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

3. **The Book of Enoch**
   By the Rev. R. H. CHARLES, D.D., Canon of Westminster. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

4. **The Book of Jubilees**
   By the Rev. Canon CHARLES. 4*s.* net.

5. **The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs**
   By the Rev. Canon CHARLES. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

6. **The Odes and Psalms of Solomon**
   By the Rev. G. H. Box, M.A., Rector of Sutton, Beds., Hon. Canon of St. Albans.

7. **The Ascension of Isaiah**
   By the Rev. Canon CHARLES. Together with No. 10 in one volume. 4*s.* 6*d.* net.

8. **The Apocalypse of Ezra (ii. Esdras)**
   By the Rev. Canon Box. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

9. **The Apocalypse of Baruch**
   By the Rev. Canon CHARLES. Together with No. 12 in one volume. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

10. **The Apocalypse of Abraham**
    By the Rev. Canon Box. Together with No. 7 in one volume. 4*s.* 6*d.* net.

11. **The Testaments of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**
By the Rev. Canon Box and S. Gazelee.

12. **The Assumption of Moses**
By Rev. W. J. Ferrar, M.A., Vicar of Holy Trinity, East Finchley. With No. 9 in one volume. *2s. 6d.* net.

13. **The Biblical Antiquities of Philo**
By M. R. James, Litt.D., F.B.A., Hon. Litt.D., Dublin, Hon. LL.D., St. Andrews, Provost of King's College, Cambridge. *8s. 6d.* net.

14. **Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament**
By M. R. James, Litt.D.

SECOND SERIES—Hellenistic-Jewish Texts

1. **The Wisdom of Solomon**
By the Rev. Dr. Oesterley. *2s. 6d.* net.

2. **The Sibylline Oracles (Books iii-v)**
By the Rev. H. N. Bate, M.A., Vicar of Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, W.; Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of London. *3s. 6d.* net.

3. **The Letter of Aristeas**
By H. St. John Thackeray, M.A., King's College, Cambridge. *2s. 6d.* net.

4. **Selections from Philo**
By J. H. A. Hart, M.A.

5. **Selections from Josephus**
By H. St. J. Thackeray, M.A.

6. **The Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees**
By the Rev. C. W. Emmet, B.D., Vicar of West Hendred, Berks. *3s. 6d.* net.

7. **The Book of Joseph and Asenath**
Translated from the Greek text (for the first time in English) by E. W. Brooks. *2s. 6d.* net.

THIRD SERIES—Palestinian-Jewish and Cognate Texts (Rabbinic)

*1. **Pirqe Aboth.** By the Rev. Dr. OESTERLEY.
*2. **Berakhoth.** By the Rev. A. LUKYN WILLIAMS, D.D.
*3. **Yoma.** By the Rev. Canon BOX.
*4. **Shabbath.** By the Rev. Dr. OESTERLEY.
*5. **Sanhedrin.** By the Rev. H. DANBY. 6*s.* net.
*6. **Kimhi's Commentary on the Psalms** (Book I, Selections). By the Rev. R. G. FINCH, B.D. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.
7. **Tamid**
8. **Aboda Zara**
9. **Middoth**
10. **Sopherim**
11. **Megilla**
12. **Sukka**
13. **Taanith**
14. **Megillath Taanith**

* It is proposed to publish these texts first by way of experiment. If the Series should so far prove successful the others will follow.

Jewish Literature and Christian Origins:

Vol. I. The Apocalyptic Literature.
,, II. A Short Survey of the Literature of Rabbinical Judaism.

By the Revs. Dr. OESTERLEY and Canon BOX.

Jewish Uncanonical Writings: A Popular Introduction. By the Rev. W. J. FERRAR. 3*s.* net.

Handbooks of Christian Literature

The Early Christian Books. By the Rev. W. J. FERRAR, M.A. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

The Eucharistic Office of the Book of Common Prayer. By the Rev. LESLIE WRIGHT, M.A., B.D. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture. By the Rev. G. D. BARRY, B.D. 4*s.* 6*d.* net.

The Letters of St. Augustine. By the Rev. W. J. SPARROW-SIMPSON, D.D.

Translations of Christian Literature

A NUMBER of translations from the Fathers have already been published by the S.P.C.K. under the title "Early Church Classics." It is now proposed to enlarge this series to include texts which are neither "early" nor necessarily "classics." The divisions at present proposed are given below. Volumes belonging to the original series are marked with an asterisk.

The Month says: "The cheap and useful series."
The Church Times says: "The splendid series."

SERIES I.—GREEK TEXTS.

St. Dionysius the Areopagite: The Divine Names and the Mystical Theology. By C. E. ROLT.

The Library of Photius. By J. H FREESE. In 6 Vols.

The Apocriticus of Macarius Magnes. By T. W. CRAFER, D.D.

***The Epistle of St. Clement, Bishop of Rome.** By the Rt. Rev. J. A. F. GREGG, D.D. 1*s.* 3*d.* net.

***Clement of Alexandria: Who is the Rich Man that is being saved?** By P. M. BARNARD, B.D. 1*s.* 3*d.* net.

***St. Chrysostom: On the Priesthood.** By T. A. MOXON. 2*s.* net.

***The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles.** By C. BIGG, D.D. 1*s.* 3*d.* net.

***The Epistle to Diognetus.** By the Rt. Rev. L. B. RADFORD, D.D. 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

St. Dionysius of Alexandria. By C. L. FELTOE, D.D. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

***The Epistle of the Gallican Churches: Lugdunum and Vienna.** With an Appendix containing Tertullian's Address to Martyrs and the Passion of St. Perpetua. By T. H. BINDLEY, D.D. 1*s.* 3*d.* net.

***St. Gregory of Nyssa: The Catechetical Oration.** By the Ven. J. H. SRAWLEY, D.D. 2*s.* net.

***St. Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of St. Macrina.** By W. K. LOWTHER CLARKE, B.D. 1*s.* 3*d.* net.

***Gregory Thaumaturgus (Origen the Teacher): the Address of Gregory to Origen, with Origen's Letter to Gregory.** By W. METCALFE, B.D. 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

***The Shepherd of Hermas.** By C. TAYLOR, D.D. 2 vols. 2*s.* each net.

SERIES I.—GREEK TEXTS (*continued*).

The Epistles of St. Ignatius. By the Ven. J. H. SRAWLEY, D.D. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

***St. Irenaeus: Against the Heresies.** By F. R. M. HITCHCOCK, D.D. 2 vols. 2*s.* each net.

Palladius: The Lausiac History. By W. K. LOWTHER CLARKE, B.D. 5*s.* net.

***St. Polycarp.** By B. JACKSON. 1*s.* 3*d.* net.

SERIES II.—LATIN TEXTS.

Tertullian's Treatises concerning Prayer, concerning Baptism. By A. SOUTER, Litt.D. 3*s.* net.

Tertullian against Praxeas. By A. SOUTER, Litt.D.

Novatian on the Trinity. By H. MOORE.

***St. Augustine: The City of God.** By F. R. M. HITCHCOCK, D.D. 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

***St. Cyprian: The Lord's Prayer.** By T. H. BINDLEY, D.D. 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

Minucius Felix: The Octavius. By J. H. FREESE. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

***Tertullian: On the Testimony of the Soul and On the Prescription of Heretics.** By T. H. BINDLEY, D.D. 2*s.* net.

***St. Vincent of Lerins: The Commonitory.** By T. H. BINDLEY, D.D. 2*s.* net.

SERIES III.—LITURGICAL TEXTS.

EDITED BY C. L. FELTOE, D.D.

St. Ambrose: On the Mysteries and on the Sacraments. By T. THOMPSON, B.D., and J. H. SRAWLEY, D.D. 4*s.* 6*d.* net.

***The Apostolic Constitution and Cognate Documents, with special reference to their Liturgical elements.** By DE LACY O'LEARY, D.D. 1*s.* 3*d.* net.

***The Liturgy of the Eighth Book of the Apostolic Constitution, commonly called the Clementine Liturgy.** By R. H. CRESSWELL. 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

The Pilgrimage of Etheria. By M. L. MCCLURE. 6*s.* net.

***Bishop Sarapion's Prayer-Book.** By the Rt. Rev. J. WORDSWORTH, D.D. 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

(*Other series in contemplation*)

Helps for Students of History

Edited by

C. JOHNSON, M.A., and J. P. WHITNEY, D.D., D.C.L.

The American Historical Review says: "A most useful little series of pamphlets."

The Times Educational Supplement says: "These little volumes by well-known specialists should be in the hands of serious students of history."

1. **Episcopal Registers of England and Wales.** By R. C. FOWLER, B.A., F.S.A. 6*d.* net.
2. **Municipal Records.** By F. J. C. HEARNSHAW, M.A. 6*d.* net.
3. **Medieval Reckonings of Time.** By REGINALD L. POOLE, LL.D., Litt.D. 6*d.* net.
4. **The Public Record Office.** By C. JOHNSON, M.A. 6*d.* net.
5. **The Care of Documents.** By C. JOHNSON, M.A. 6*d.* net.
6. **The Logic of History.** By C. G. CRUMP. 8*d.* net.
7. **Documents in the Public Record Office, Dublin.** By R. H. MURRAY, Litt.D. 8*d.* net.
8. **The French Wars of Religion.** By ARTHUR A. TILLEY, M.A. 6*d.* net.

By Sir A. W. WARD, Litt.D., F.B.A.

9. **The Period of Congresses—I. Introductory.** 8*d.* net.
10. **The Period of Congresses—II. Vienna and the Second Peace of Paris.** 1*s.* net.
11. **The Period of Congresses—III. Aix-la-Chapelle to Verona.** 1*s.* net.

Nos. 9, 10, and 11 in one volume, cloth, 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

12. **Securities of Peace: A Retrospect (1848–1914).** Paper, 2*s.* net; cloth, 3*s.* net.

---

13. **The French Renaissance.** By A. A. TILLEY, M.A. 8*d.* net.
14. **Hints on the Study of English Economic History.** By Archdeacon W. CUNNINGHAM, D.D., F.B.A., F.S.A. 8*d.* net.
15. **Parish History and Records.** By A. HAMILTON THOMPSON, M.A., F.S.A. 8*d.* net.
16. **A Short Introduction to the Study of Colonial History.** By A. P. NEWTON, M.A., D.Lit. 6*d.* net.

Texts for Students

General Editors: CAROLINE A. J. SKEEL, D.Lit.; H. J. WHITE, D.D.; J. P. WHITNEY, D.D., D.C.L.

The English Historical Review says: "A new series which deserves mention . . . every number is the work of a scholar of acknowledged competence."

Catholic Book Notes says: "The S.P.C.K. has rendered a service to Education . . . It is to be hoped that these texts will find their way into our colleges: they will give a new meaning to Latin and history."

1. **Select Passages from Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio Cassius,** illustrative of Christianity in the First Century. Arranged by H. J. WHITE, D.D. Paper cover, 3*d*. net.

2. **Selections from Matthew Paris.** By C. A. J. SKEEL, D.Lit. Paper cover, 9*d*. net.

3. **Selections from Giraldus Cambrensis.** By C. A. J. SKEEL, D.Lit. Paper cover, 9*d*. net.

4. **Libri Sancti Patricii.** The Latin Writings of St. Patrick, etc. Edited by NEWPORT J. D. WHITE, D.D. Paper cover, 6*d*. net.

5. **A Translation of the Latin Writings of St. Patrick.** By NEWPORT J. D. WHITE, D.D. Paper cover, 6*d*. net.

6. **Selections from the Vulgate.** Paper cover, 9*d*. net.

7. **The Epistle of St. Clement of Rome.** Paper cover, 6*d*. net.

8. **Select Extracts from Chronicles and Records relating to English Towns in the Middle Ages.** Edited, with Introduction, Notes, and Glossary, by F. J. C. HEARNSHAW, M.A., LL.D. Paper cover, 9*d*. net.

9. **The Inscription on the Stele of Méša.** Commonly called the Moabite Stone. The text in Moabite and Hebrew, with translation by the Rev. H. F. B. COMPSTON, M.A. Paper cover, 6*d*. net.

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
LONDON: 6 ST. MARTIN'S PLACE, W.C. 2
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

5.7.19.]